# KASANE

4

daruma matsuura

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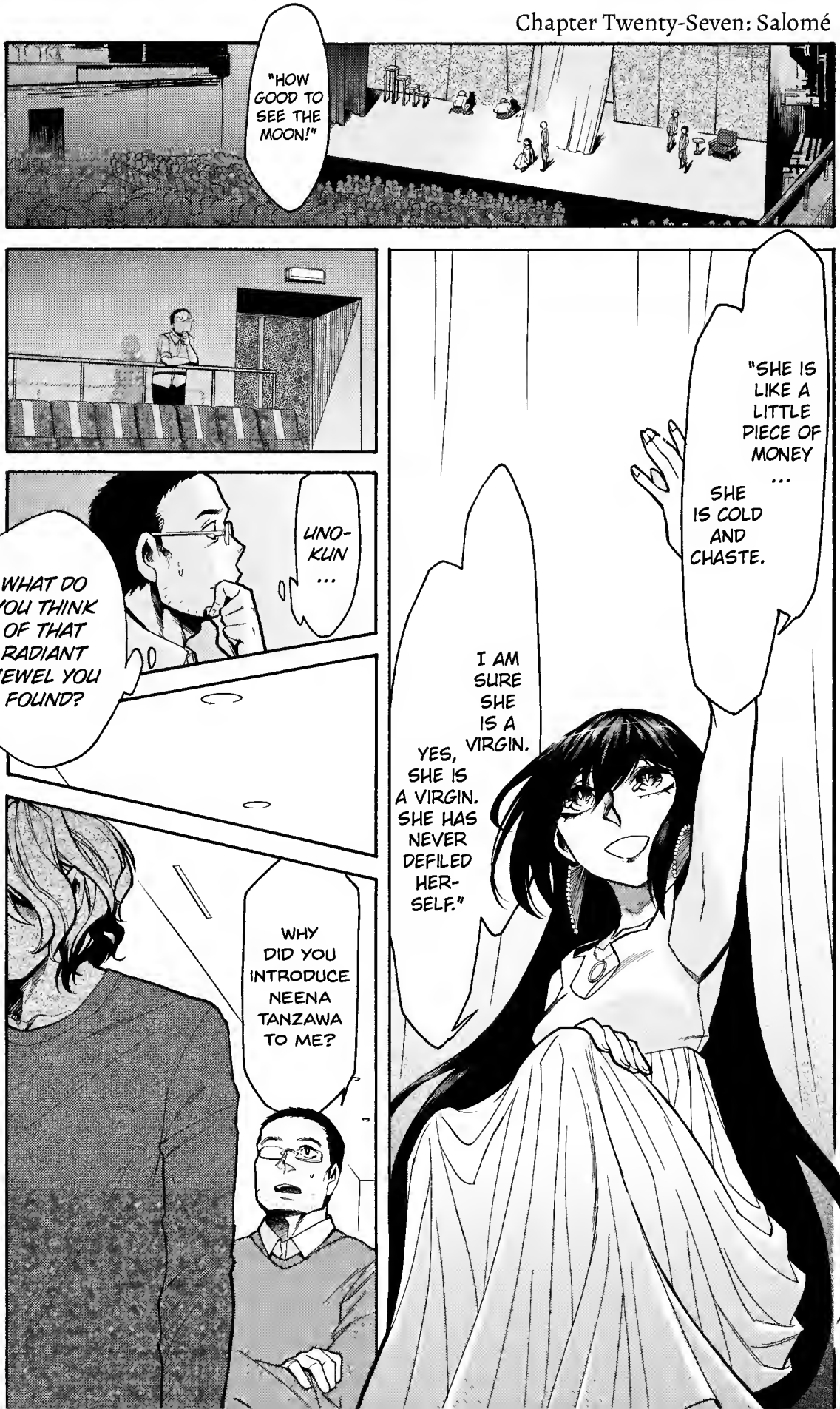
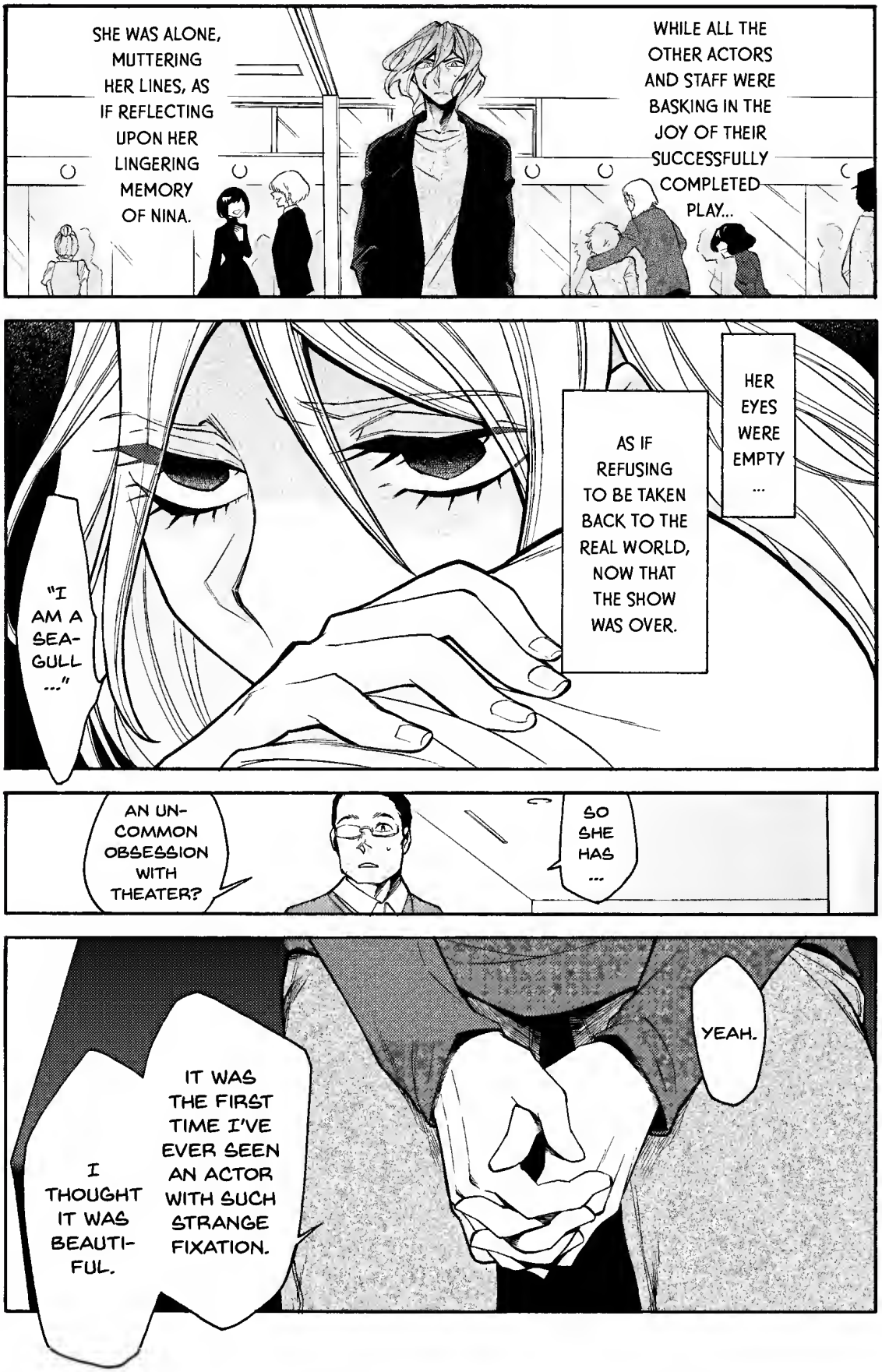
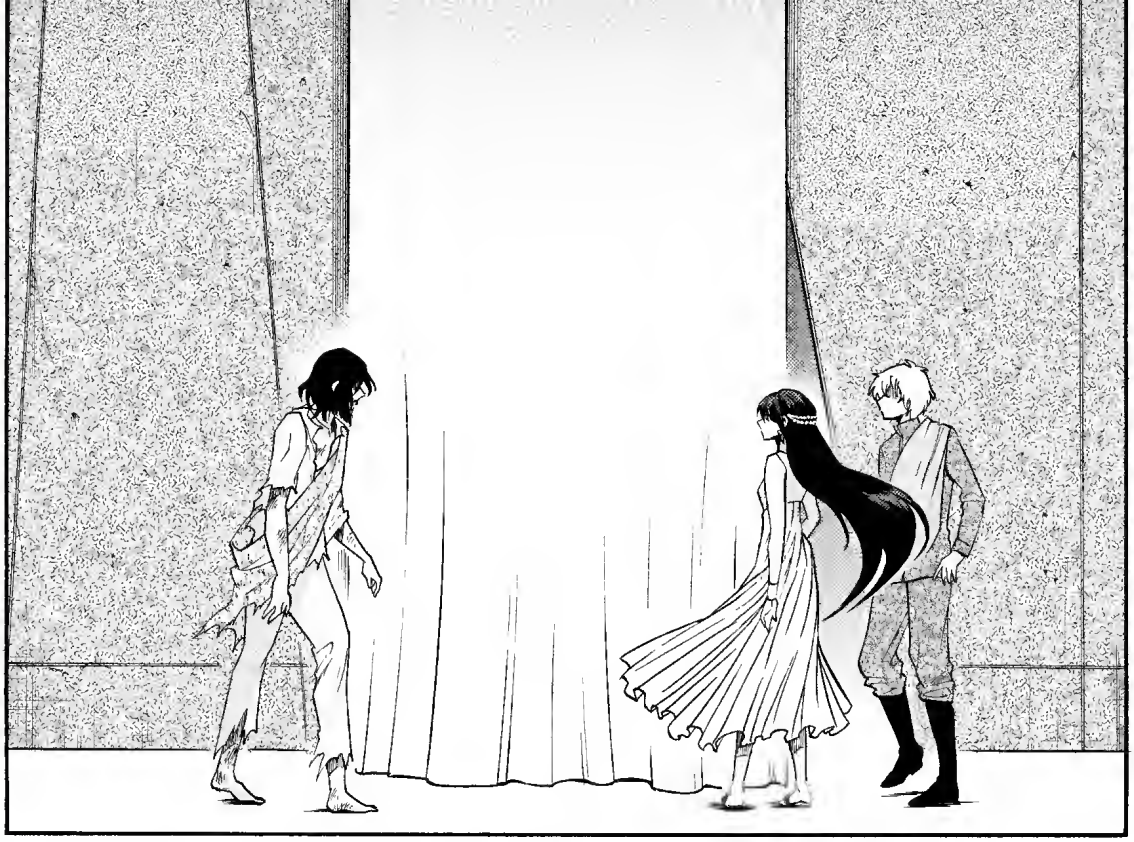
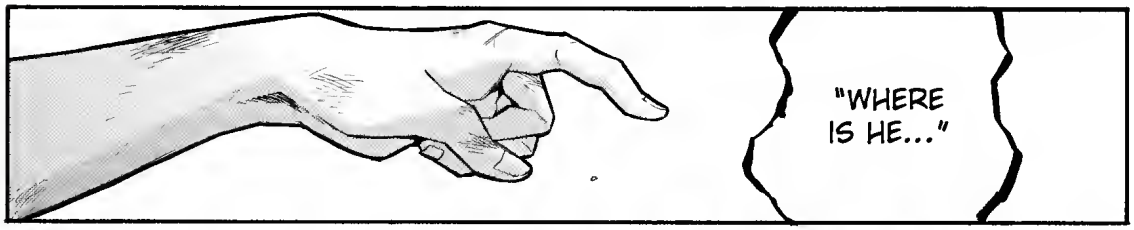

"HOW GOOD TO SEE THE MOON!"
UNO-KUN ...
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT RADIANT JEWEL YOU FOUND?
WHY DID YOU INTRODUCE NEENA TANZAWA TO ME?
"SHE IS LIKE A LITTLE PIECE OF MONEY ... SHE IS COLD AND CHASTE.
I AM SURE SHE IS A VIRGIN.
YES, SHE IS A VIRGIN. SHE HAS NEVER DEFILED HERSELF."

THE FIRST TIME I SAW HER WAS IN THE FINAL PERFORMANCE OF *THE SEAGULL*, DIRECTED BY REITA UGOU.
ON STAGE, SHE WAS IMPRESSIVE...
BUT IT WAS WHEN I WAS VISITING AN ACTOR FRIEND IN THE GREEN-ROOM THAT I SAW...
"SO YOU ARE AN AUTHOR NOW, AND I AM AN ACTRESS. YOU ARE AN AUTHOR, AND I AM AN ACTRESS..."


SHE WAS ALONE, MUTTERING HER LINES, AS IF REFLECTING UPON HER LINGERING MEMORY OF NINA.
WHILE ALL THE OTHER ACTORS AND STAFF WERE BASKING IN THE JOY OF THEIR SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED PLAY...
HER EYES WERE EMPTY ...
AS IF REFUSING TO BE TAKEN BACK TO THE REAL WORLD, NOW THAT THE SHOW WAS OVER.
"I AM A SEA-GULL ..."
SO SHE HAS ...
AN UN-COMMON OBSESSION WITH THEATER?
YEAH.
IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN AN ACTOR WITH SUCH STRANGE FIXATION.
I THOUGHT IT WAS BEAUTI-FUL.

THAT'S WHY I DON'T WANT HER TO GIVE ANYTHING LESS THAN ONE HUNDRED PERCENT.
AND I...
HAVE TO PLAY A JOKANAAN WHO IS NO LESS FANTASTIC THAN HER SALOMÉ.




"WHERE IS HE..."

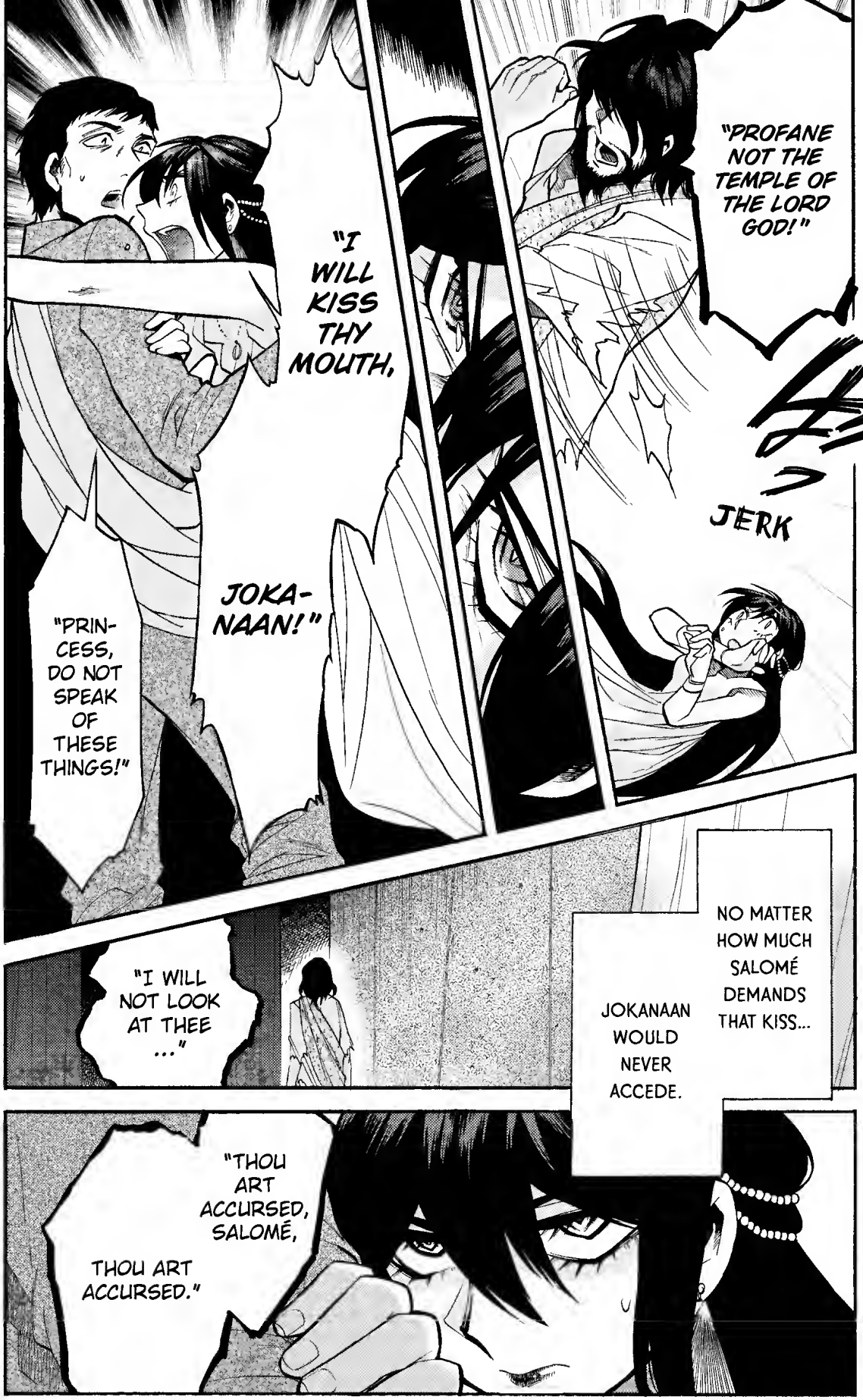
"WHOSE CUP OF ABOMINATIONS IS NOW FULL? WHERE IS HE ...
WHERE IS HE ... WHO IN A ROBE OF SILVER SHALL ONE DAY DIE... IN THE FACE OF ALL THE PEOPLE?"
THE PROPHET JOKANAAN SPEAKS THE WORD OF GOD.
THIS IMPRISONED SAINT, ONE FEARED BY KINGS...

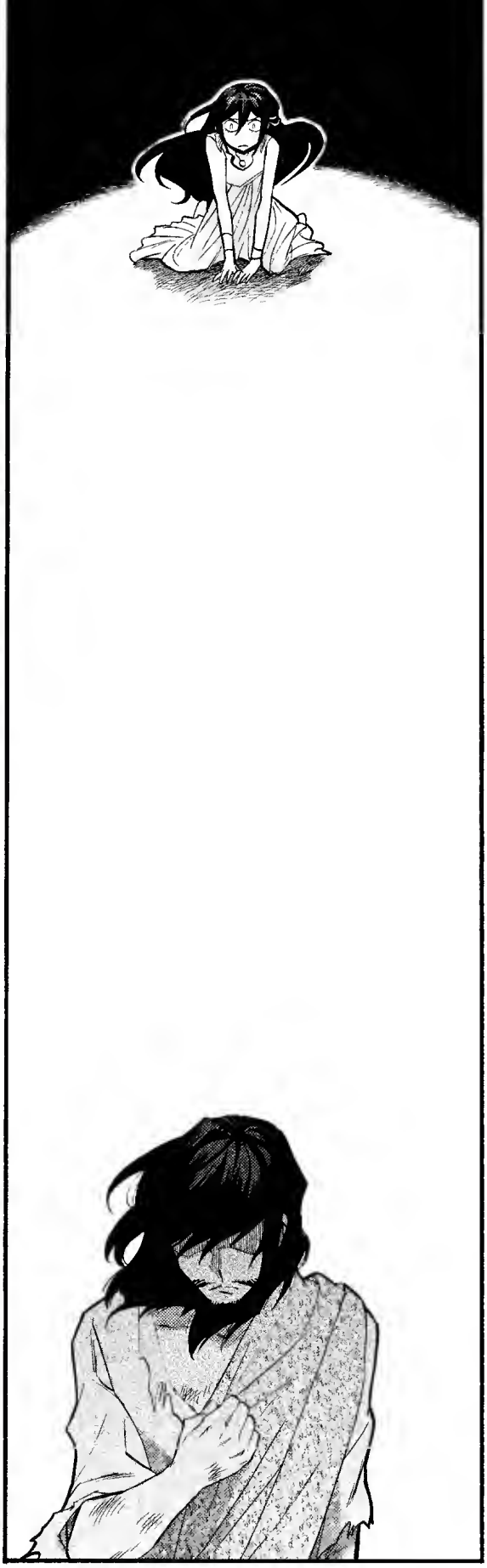
IS THE MAN SA-LOMÉ FALLS IN LOVE WITH.
"I AM SURE ...
HE IS CHASTE AS THE MOON IS."

BUT...
"WHO IS THIS WOMAN WHO IS LOOKING AT ME?"

"WHERE-FORE DOTH SHE LOOK AT ME WITH HER GOLDEN EYES UNDER HER GILDED EYELIDS?
I DO NOT DESIRE TO KNOW WHO SHE IS.
BID HER BE-GONE."
"I AM SALOMÉ, DAUGH-TER OF HERODIAS, PRINCESS OF JUDÆA."

"BACK! DAUGHTER OF BABYLON!
COME NOT NEAR THE CHOSEN OF THE LORD."
JOKA-NAAN REJECTS HER...
AND WILL NOT EVEN LOOK AT HER.
"I WILL NOT LISTEN TO THEE.
I LISTEN BUT TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD."
"IT IS THY MOUTH THAT I DESIRE, JOKANAAN.
THY MOUTH ..."
"SUFFER ME TO KISS THY MOUTH.
"I WILL ...
KISS THY MOUTH."

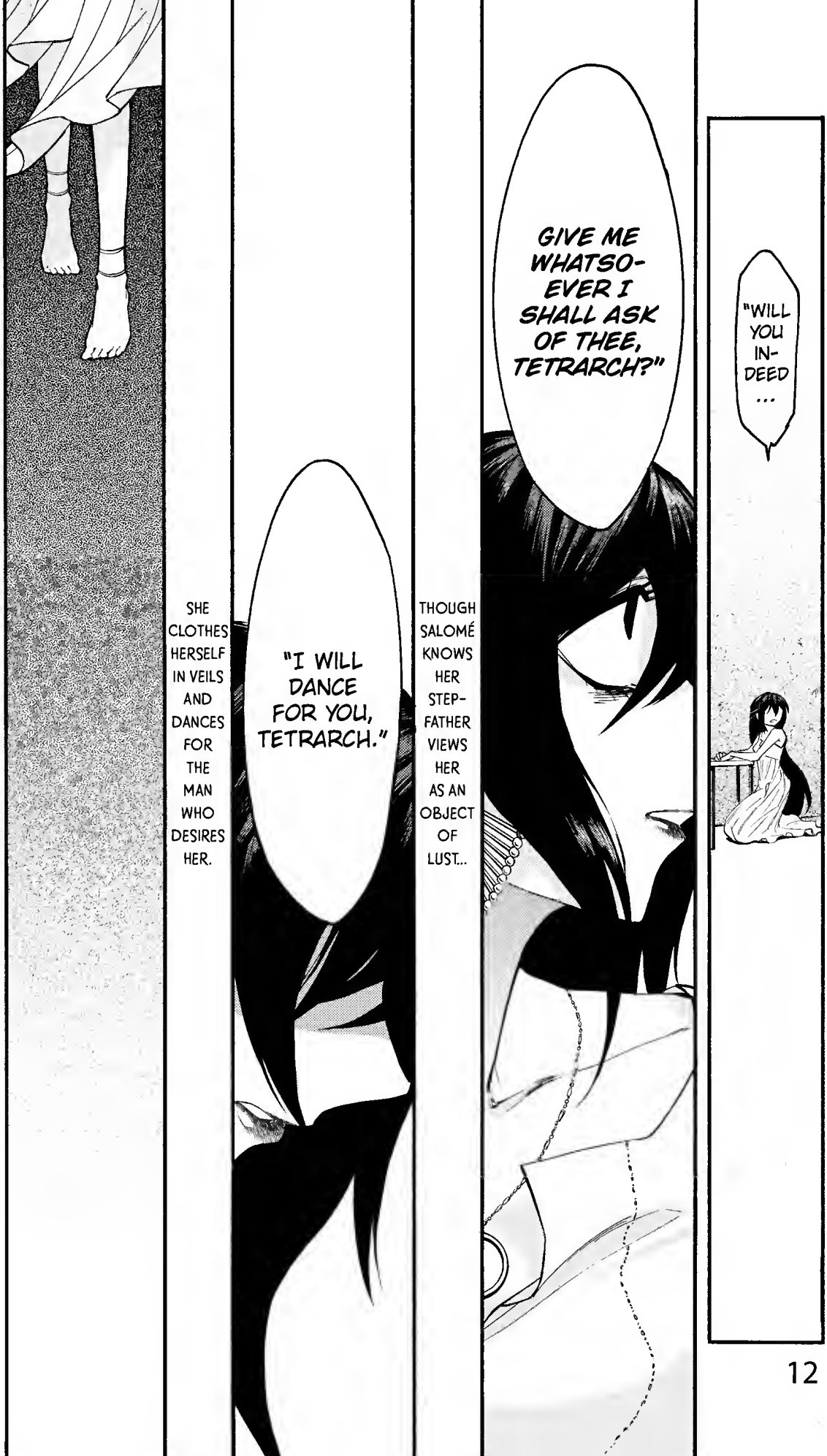

"PROFANE NOT THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD GOD!"
"I WILL KISS THY MOUTH,
JERK
JOKA-NAAN!"
"PRIN-CESS, DO NOT SPEAK OF THESE THINGS!"
"I WILL NOT LOOK AT THEE ..."
NO MATTER HOW MUCH SALOMÉ DEMANDS THAT KISS...
JOKANAAN WOULD NEVER ACCEDE.
"THOU ART ACCURSED, SALOMÉ,
THOU ART ACCURSED."



"DANCE
FOR ME.

IF THOU
DANCEST
FOR ME
THOU
MAYEST ASK
OF ME WHAT
THOU WILT,
AND I WILL
GIVE IT
THEE."

"DO
NOT
DANCE,
MY
DAUGH-
TER."


"WILL YOU INDEED ...
GIVE ME WHATSOEVER I SHALL ASK OF THEE, TETRARCH?"
THOUGH SALOMÉ KNOWS HER STEP-FATHER VIEWS HER AS AN OBJECT OF LUST...
"I WILL DANCE FOR YOU, TETRARCH."
SHE CLOTHES HERSELF IN VEILS AND DANCES FOR THE MAN WHO DESIRES HER.

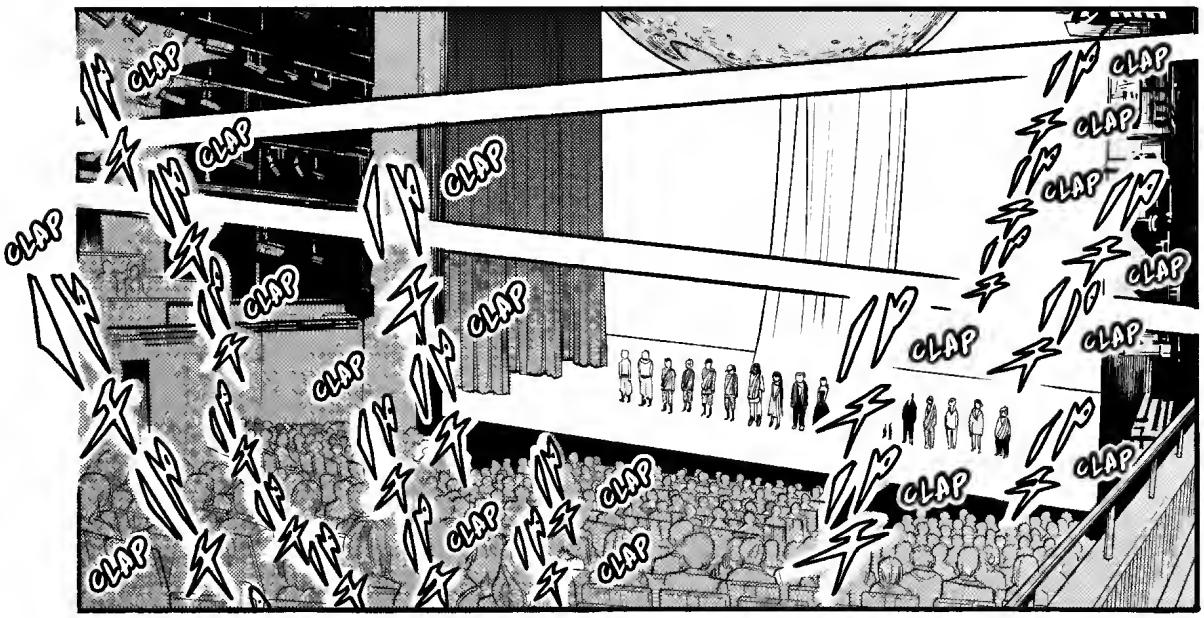
"AH! WONDER-FUL! WONDER-FUL!"

"O SWEET AND FAIR SALOMÉ,
THOU ART FAIRER THAN ALL THE DAUGHTERS OF JUDÆA!
WHAT IS IT THAT THOU WOULDST HAVE?"
"..."
SALOMÉ'S LOVE BOTH PURELY CHASTE AS A YOUNG GIRL'S LOVE, AND TAINTED AS WITH THE BLOOD OF A FILTHY WHORE.
AND SO IT RACES TO A BLOODY END.
"THE ..."
"THE HEAD OF JOKANAAN!"

"AHHHH!
JOKA-NAAN!
JOKA-NAAN, THOU WERT THE MAN THAT I LOVED ALONE AMONG MEN."
HAVE NONE OF ME, JOKA-NAAN."
"THOU WOULDST ...
"ME, SA-LOMÉ, DAUGH-TER OF HERODI-AS,
PRINCESS OF JUDÆA!"

"ALL OTHER MEN WERE HATEFUL TO ME.
BUT THOU WERT BEAUTIFUL!"
"AH! WHEREFORE DIDST THOU NOT LOOK AT ME, JOKANAAN?
IF THOU HADST SEEN ME, THOU HADST LOVED ME.
I SAW THEE, AND I LOVED THEE.
"AH ...
I HAVE ...
KISSED THY LIPS, JOKANAAN ..."

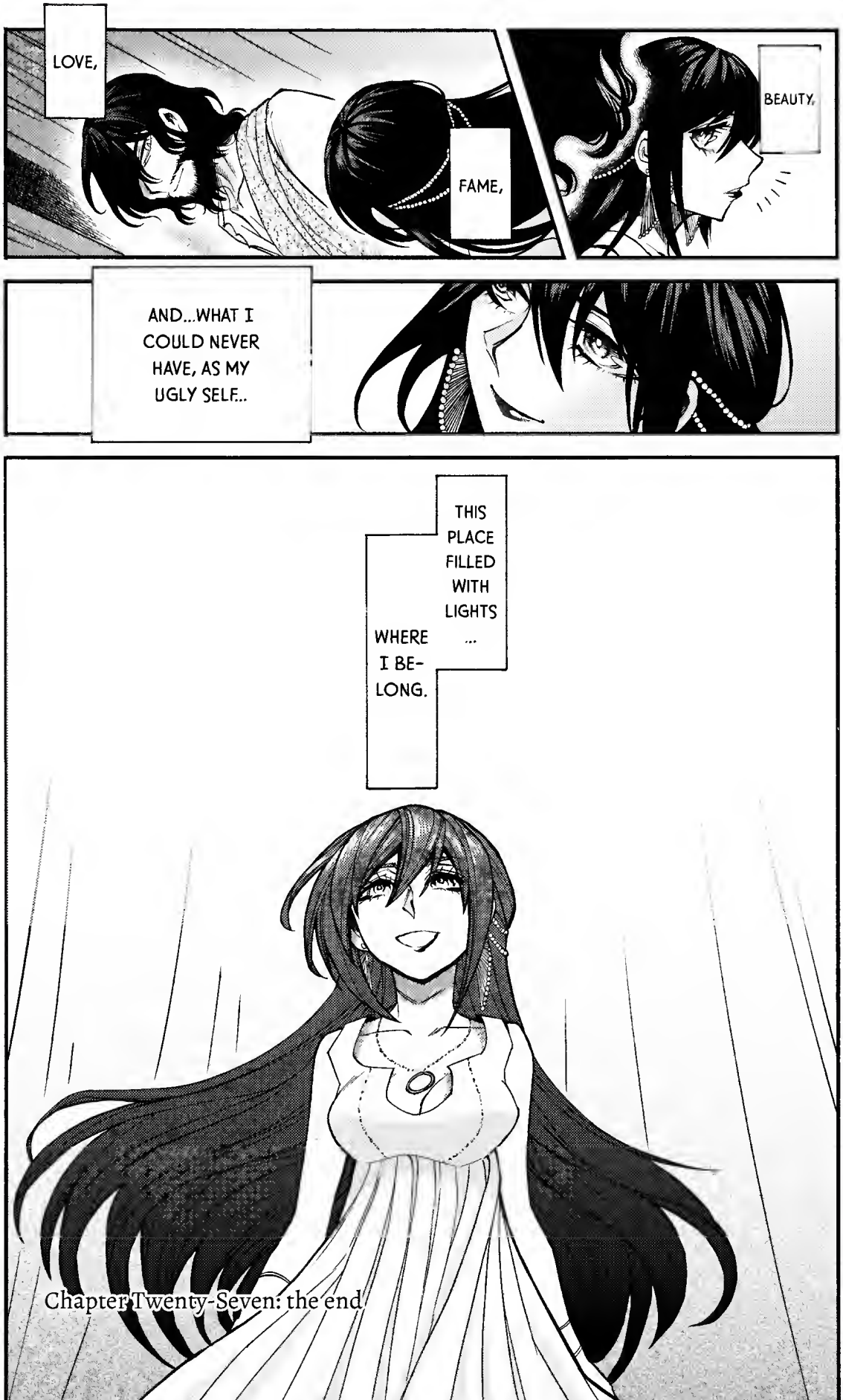
"I...
HAVE ...
KISSED THY LIPS ..."


CLAP

THIS PERFORMANCE WILL REALLY BUILD "NEENA TANZAWA'S" REPUTATION.
A PASSING GRADE, KASANE.

SA-
LOMÉ
...
SALOMÉ, HUH...
IT'S LIKE YOU'RE SA-LOMÉ.
DO YOU WANT ME TO KISS YOU, KINGO?
YOU'RE ALWAYS SO CHILD-ISH...
AND SUCH A FOOL.

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
I WILL NOT HEAD TO DESTRUCTION, AS SHE DID.
I WILL HAVE IT ALL:
I WANTED TO BE YOUR JOKANAAN,
EVEN IF IT MEANT I'D END UP BEHEADED.
I...
I... WILL NOT BE LIKE SALOMÉ.

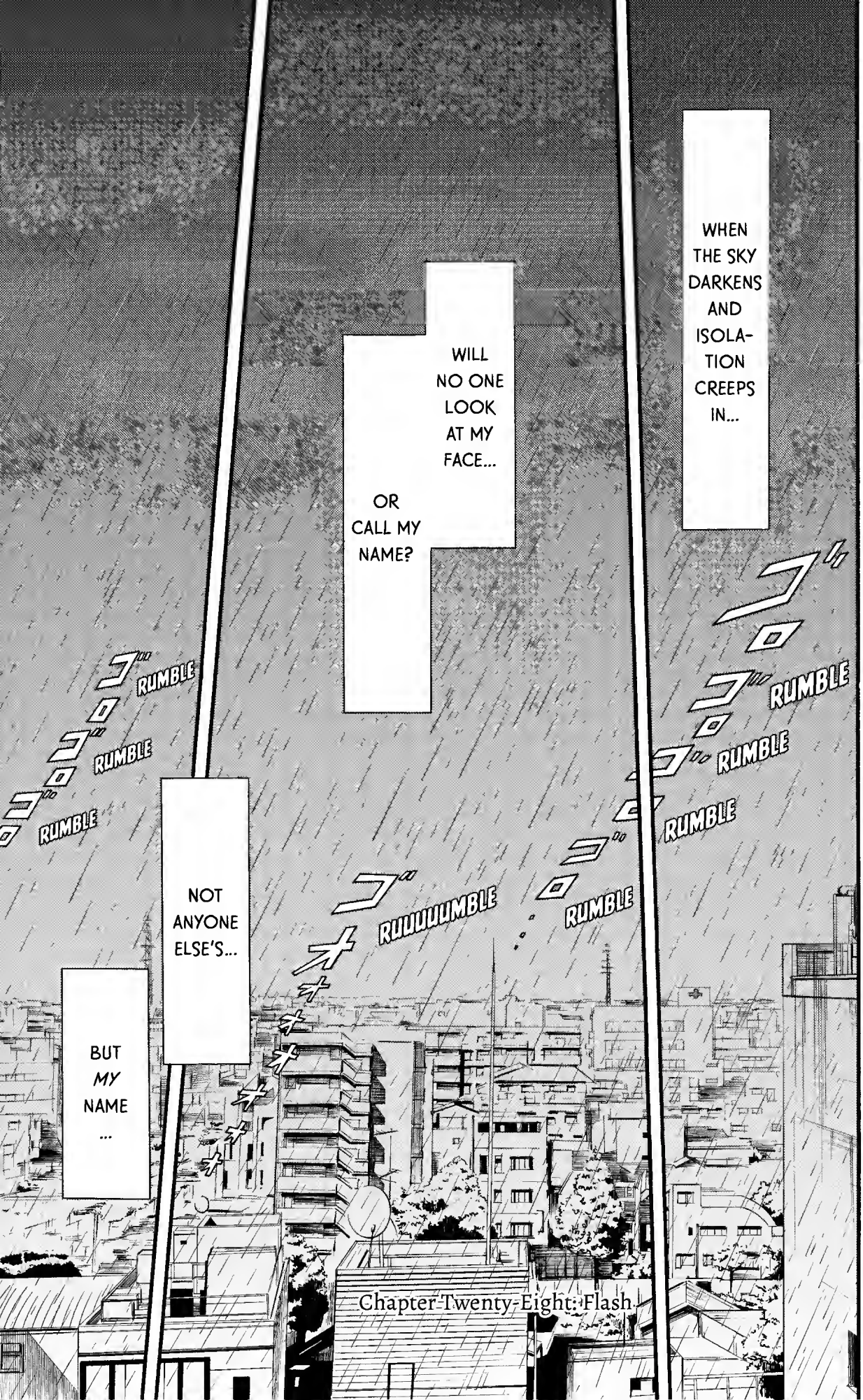



Chapter Twenty-Seven: the end

# KASANE

GIRLS 8

WOOO! AWOOO!
...
LET'S PLAY HOUSE!
THAT SCARY LOOK ON HIS FACE... WHAT'S HE PLOTTING?
I'LL BE MOMMY!
PARTRIDGE
HUH?
THEN I-I'LL UH BE...
...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
YOU'RE THE DOG?!
SHAKE!


WHEN THE SKY DARKENS AND ISOLA-TION CREEPS IN...
WILL NO ONE LOOK AT MY FACE...
OR CALL MY NAME?
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

BOOM
EEK!
WHOA!
FLASH
THAT ONE WAS CLOSE.
THIS WEATHER HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR DAYS. IT'S DE-PRESSING.
YEAH.
HEY, BY THE WAY, THAT LADY OVER THERE ...

WHY DOESN'T SHE TAKE OFF HER HOOD?



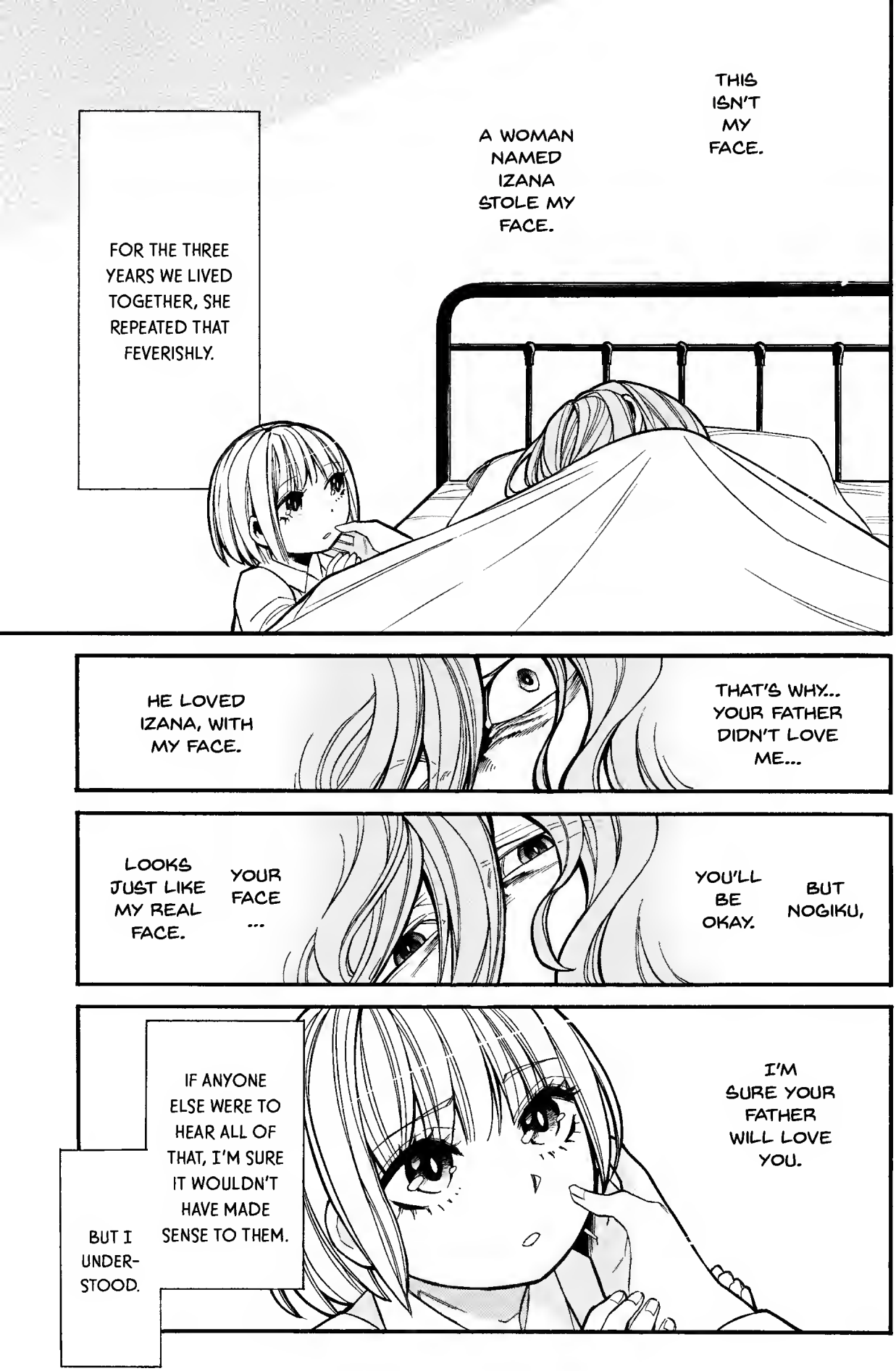

MAYBE SHE'S A CELEB? BUT HER CLOTHES ARE TOO DIRTY FOR THAT.
MAYBE SHE'S HIDING HER FACE FOR SOME NEFARIOUS REASONS.
OR SHE'S SUPER UGLY.
HEY, YOU DON'T KNOW THAT. UNDER THAT HOOD COULD BE, WELL, FOR EXAMPLE...

A FACE AS BEAUTIFUL AS NEENA TANZAWA.
FLINCH
HA HA, YEAH, I WISH.
SHE WAS SO GOOD.
YEAH. I WAS GETTING PRETTY SICK OF YOUR THEATER OBSES-SION,
BUT I'M GLAD I WENT TO SEE...
NEENA TANZAWA IN SALOMÉ!
FLASH

WHAT ?
H- DID YOU SEE THAT ?
HEY.
YES ...
SHE HAD A SCARY LOOK ON HER FACE, BUT SHE WAS REALLY PRETTY.
YEAH, BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.
SHE LOOKED JUST LIKE THAT ACTRESS ...
WHOOSH

SHE WAS THE SPITTING IMAGE OF SUKEYO FUCHI.
FLASH

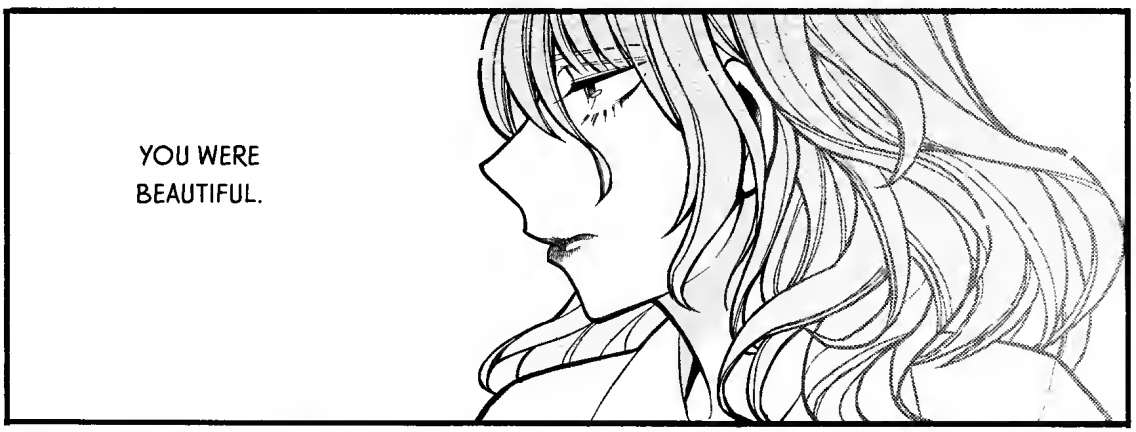
BOOM
NOGIKU...
NOGIKU...
ARE YOU SCARED OF THUNDER?
YES, WHEN I'M ALONE. BUT YOU'RE HERE, NOGIKU, SO I'M ALL RIGHT.
HEY, NOGIKU ...
AREN'T YOU SCARED OF MY FACE?
MOTHER ...
I REMEMBER YOU AS A WOMAN WHO GREW THINNER AND WEAKER BY THE DAY, YOUR FACE LOOKING NOTHING LIKE MY OWN.

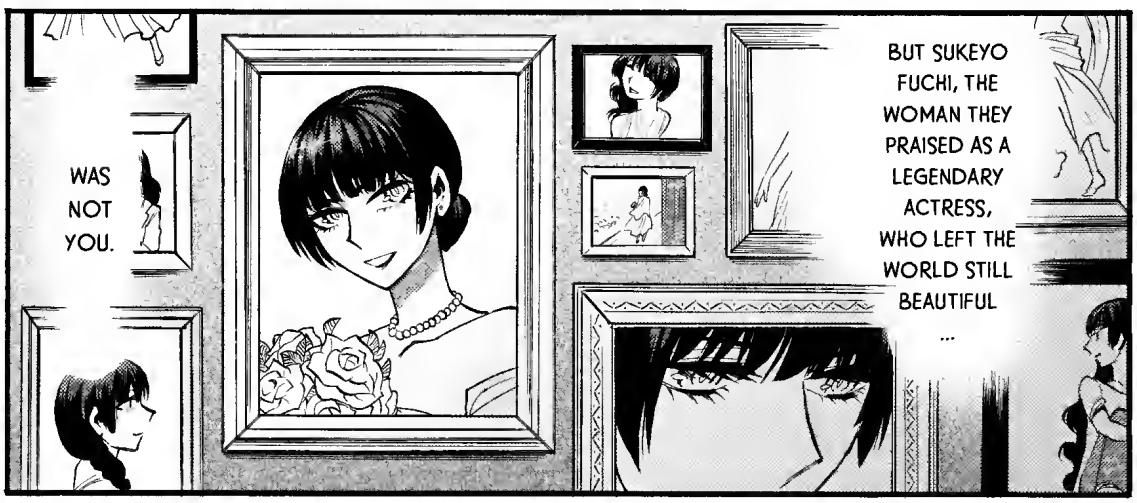

FOR THE THREE YEARS WE LIVED TOGETHER, SHE REPEATED THAT FEVERISHLY.
A WOMAN NAMED IZANA STOLE MY FACE.
THIS ISN'T MY FACE.
HE LOVED IZANA, WITH MY FACE.
THAT'S WHY... YOUR FATHER DIDN'T LOVE ME...
LOOKS JUST LIKE MY REAL FACE.
YOUR FACE ...
YOU'LL BE OKAY.
BUT NOGIKU,
BUT I UNDER-STOOD.
IF ANYONE ELSE WERE TO HEAR ALL OF THAT, I'M SURE IT WOULDN'T HAVE MADE SENSE TO THEM.
I'M SURE YOUR FATHER WILL LOVE YOU.

I HAVE A VAGUE MEMORY, ONE OF MY EARLIEST ...
THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHERE I SAW THAT SCENE.
THAT MEMORY IS BURNED INTO MY RETINAS. IT'LL NEVER LEAVE ME.
SOME-ONE WHO WAS NOT MY MOTHER ...
WITH HER FACE.

IF WHAT MY MOTHER SAID WAS TRUE...
AND...
IF WHAT I SAW WAS REAL...

THEN MOTHER...


YOU WERE BEAUTIFUL.


WAS NOT YOU.
BUT SUKEYO FUCHI, THE WOMAN THEY PRAISED AS A LEGENDARY ACTRESS, WHO LEFT THE WORLD STILL BEAUTIFUL ...

THAT WOMAN STOLE FROM YOU ...
YOUR FACE, STATUS, NAME, AND LOVE.
STRIPPED OF EVERY-THING, YOUR BODY AND SOUL BECAME A HUSK, AND YOU DIED.
AND THEN ...
WHAT WAS LEFT TO ME WAS...

SUKEYO.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU TODAY?
COME OVER HERE, NOW.
FATHER... I'M NOGIKU.
PLEASE STOP CALLING ME SUKEYO.

NO, YOU'RE SUKEYO.
TAP
WHY HAVE YOU BECOME SO DEFIANT, RECENTLY?
I KNOW...
YOU THINK THAT BECAUSE MY LEGS HAVE WEAK-ENED ...
I CAN'T TAKE YOU BY FORCE TO GET WHAT I WANT?
YOU'RE NAIVE.
AH!
THWACK

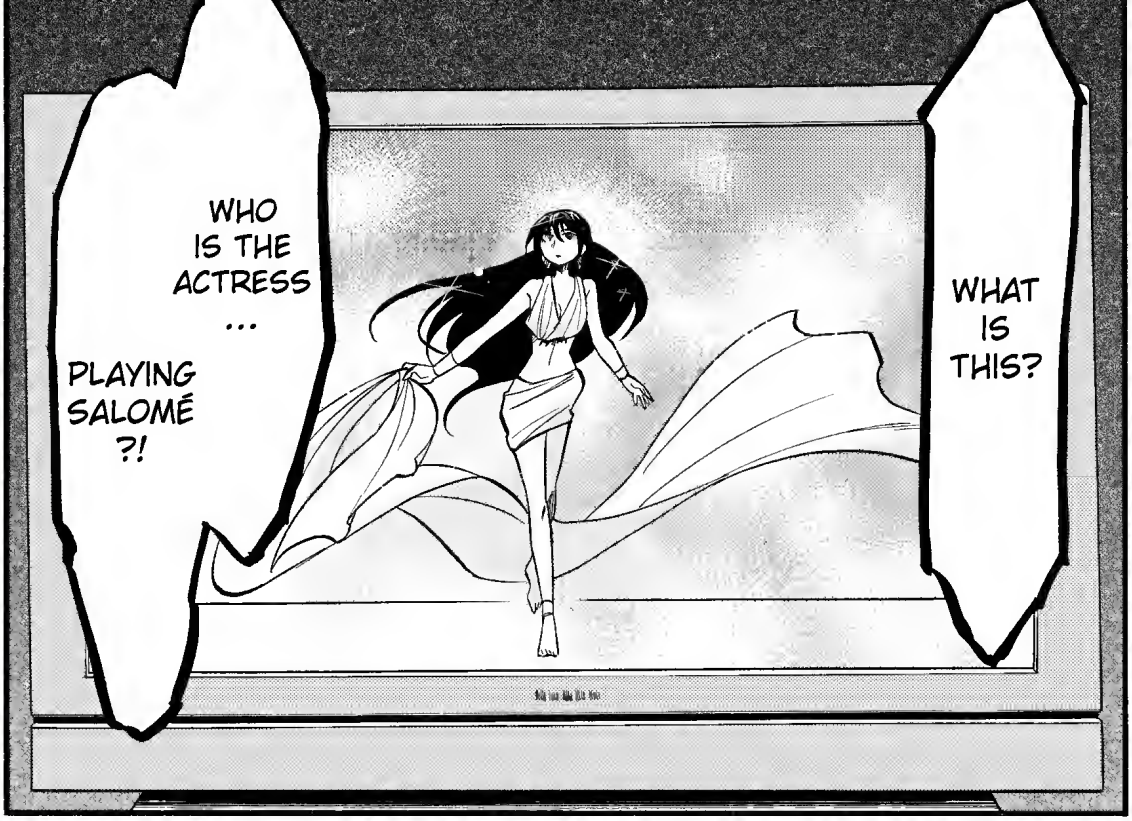
YOU'VE HARDLY LEFT THIS ESTATE.
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE WORLD.
YOU COULDN'T EVER SURVIVE WITHOUT ME.
WHY DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT MUCH?
SUKEYO WAS MORE CLEVER THAN THIS.
THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS.
TH-THE SUKEYO YOU KEEP TALKING ABOUT WAS NOT MY MOTHER.
IS THE "MOTHER" YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT ...
THAT GOOD-FOR-NOTHING?

SHE HAD NO TALENT, CLASS, OR WITS.
WHAT'S MORE ...
SHE'D ALREADY LOST HER BEAUTY, TOO, HADN'T SHE?
IT WAS FOR YOUR SAKE...
THAT I LET HER STAY HERE UNTIL SHE DIED.

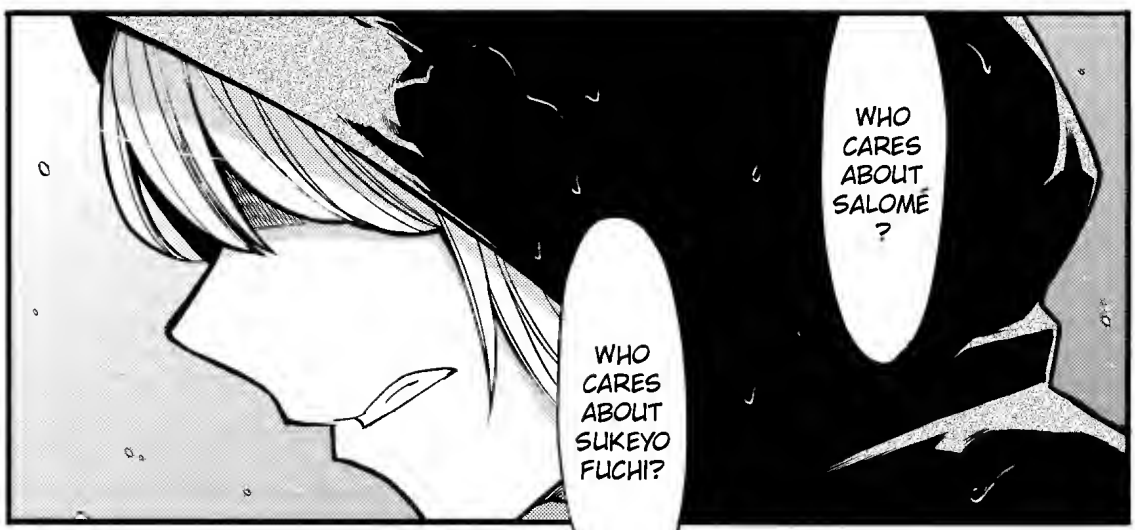
FOR MY SAKE?
BUT SHE LOVED YOU-
YOU!
YOU'RE THE ONLY THING OF WORTH SHE LEFT BEHIND!

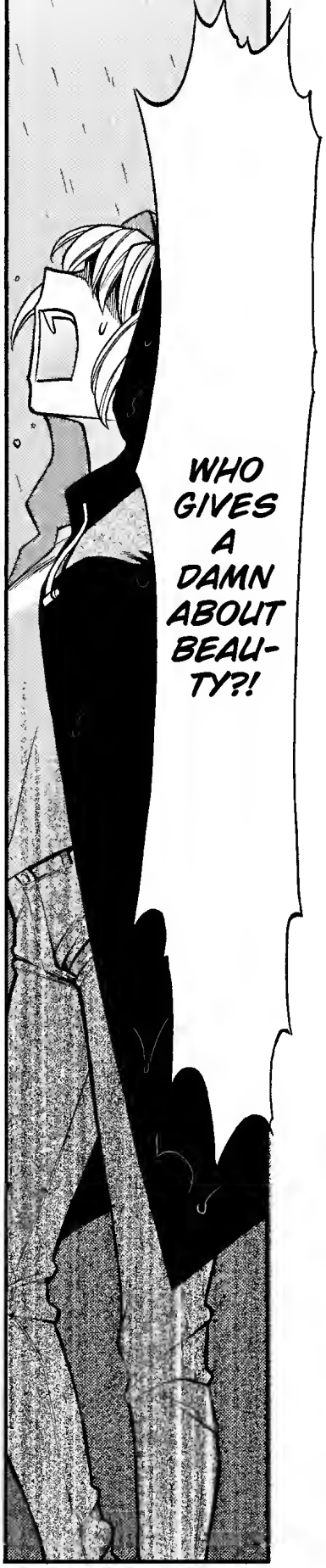
YOU'RE DIF-FERENT FROM HER.
THAT BEAUTIFUL FACE...
INCREAS-INGLY LOOKS LIKE HERS THE MORE YOU GROW.
COME ON. GO BACK TO THE REFINED AND WELL-MANNERED SUKEYO YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN.
I'LL TREAT YOU ESPECIALLY NICE, TODAY.
NO ...
WHEN I HEAR YOUR SWEET VOICE,
I FEEL LIKE EVEN I CAN RETURN TO MY YOUTH.

NOOOOOO!
SUKE-YO!
STOP IT!
AND THEN...
IN THE DARKNESS OF THE EARLY MORNING PREDAWN ...
MY FATHER WATCHED THAT MOVIE, AS IF POSSESSED.


WHAT IS THIS?
WHO IS THE ACTRESS ...
PLAYING SALOMÉ ?!

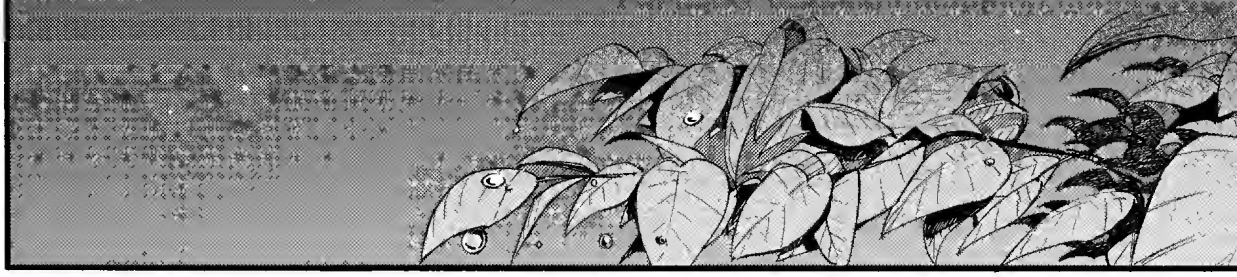
HER BEWITCHING GRACE... BRINGS BACK MEMORIES ...
SHE'S JUST LIKE... JUST LIKE THE SALOMÉ THAT SUKEYO AND I CREATED TOGETHER!


WHO CARES ABOUT SALOMÉ ?
WHO CARES ABOUT SUKEYO FUCHI?



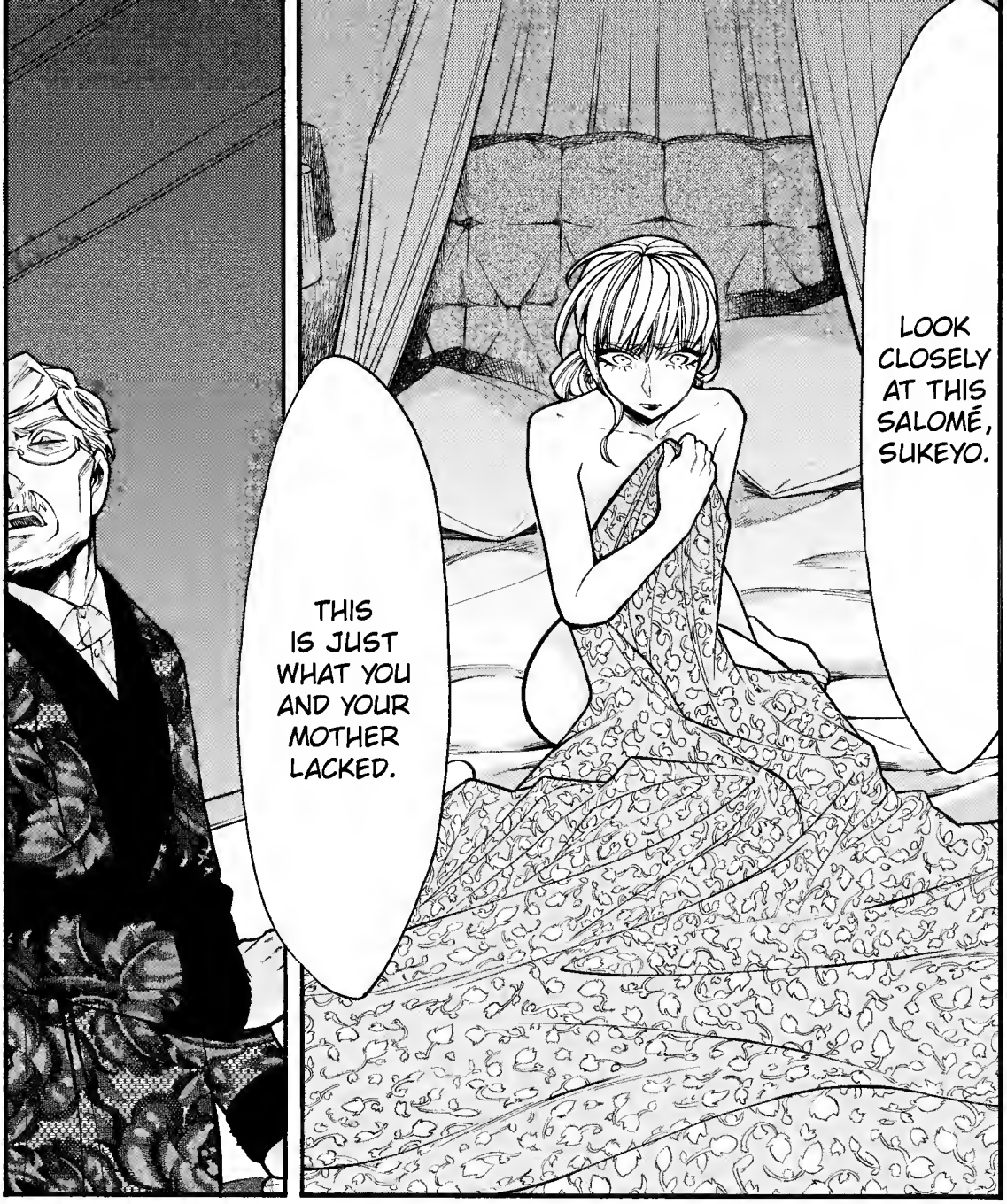

Chapter Twenty-Eight: the end

Chapter Twenty-Nine: Nogiku



NOW THAT I THINK OF IT,

WHEN HE SAW SALOMÉ THAT DAY...
THAT WAS THE TURNING POINT IN MY DESTINY.
I DIDN'T KNOW SUCH AN ACTRESS EXISTED.
A NEW TALENT, HUH...


LOOK CLOSELY AT THIS SALOMÉ, SUKEYO.
THIS IS JUST WHAT YOU AND YOUR MOTHER LACKED.

YOUR MOTHER WAS NOTHING MORE THAN EQUIPMENT ...
FOR A WOMAN NAMED IZANA TO PERFECT THE ACTRESS SUKEYO FUCHI.
UNDER MY DIRECTION, WITH HER BEAUTY AND TALENT...

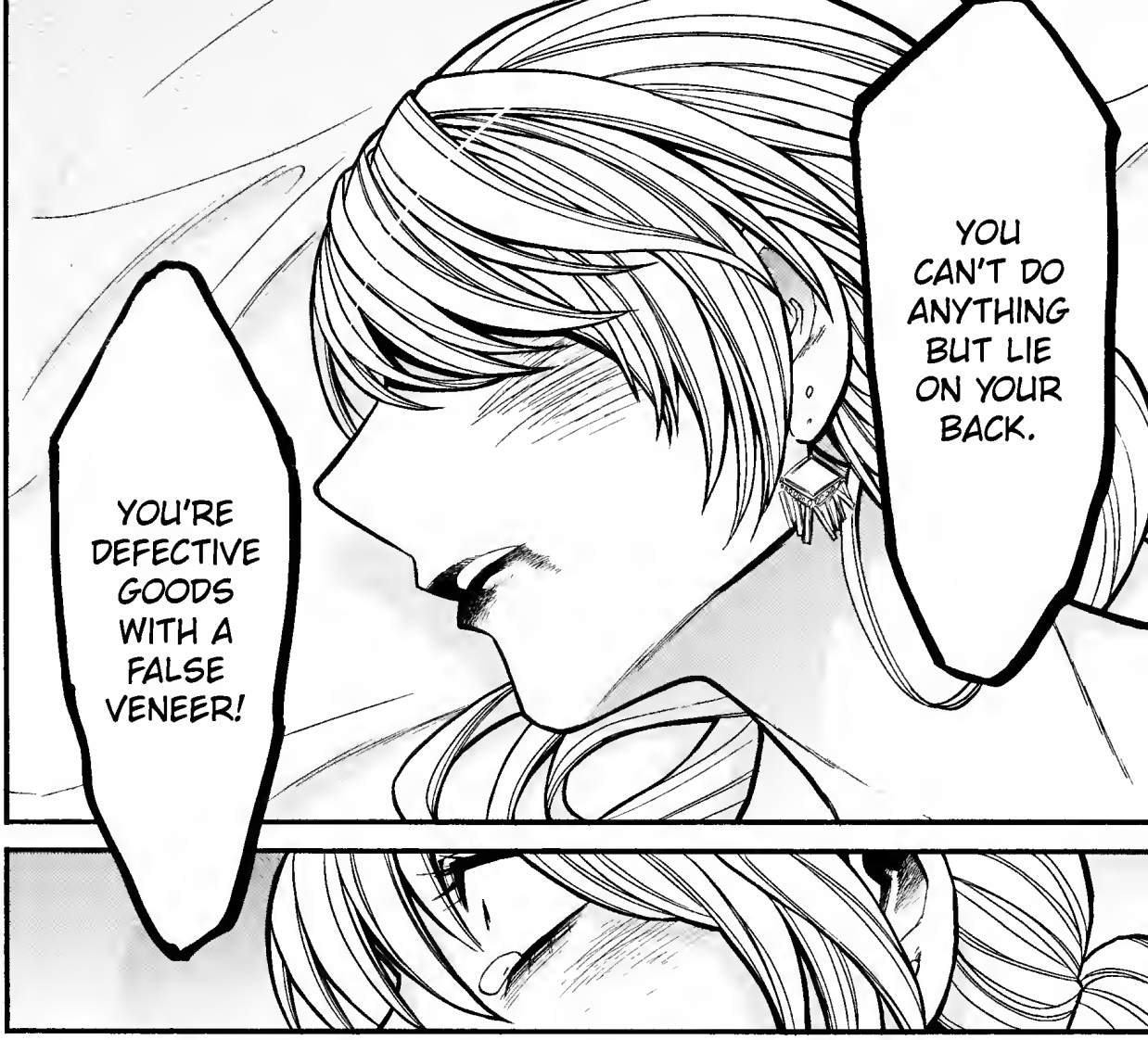
SHE WAS RADIANT BEYOND ANYTHING REAL.
THOUGH SHE WAS A MANUFACTURED IMAGE...

THIS PERFORMANCE FROM AN ACTRESS WHOSE NAME I DON'T EVEN KNOW...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
IT'S BEEN SO LONG... I'D FORGOTTEN ...

HAS MADE IT PAINFULLY CLEAR THAT YOU'RE ONLY HALF A BODY!

AHH... IT'S NOT ENOUGH ...
YOU'RE NOT ENOUGH!
EASE MY LONELI-NESS,
EASE THIS... ETER-NALLY UN-QUENCH-ABLE THIRST ...
SUKE-YO!
I CAN'T.

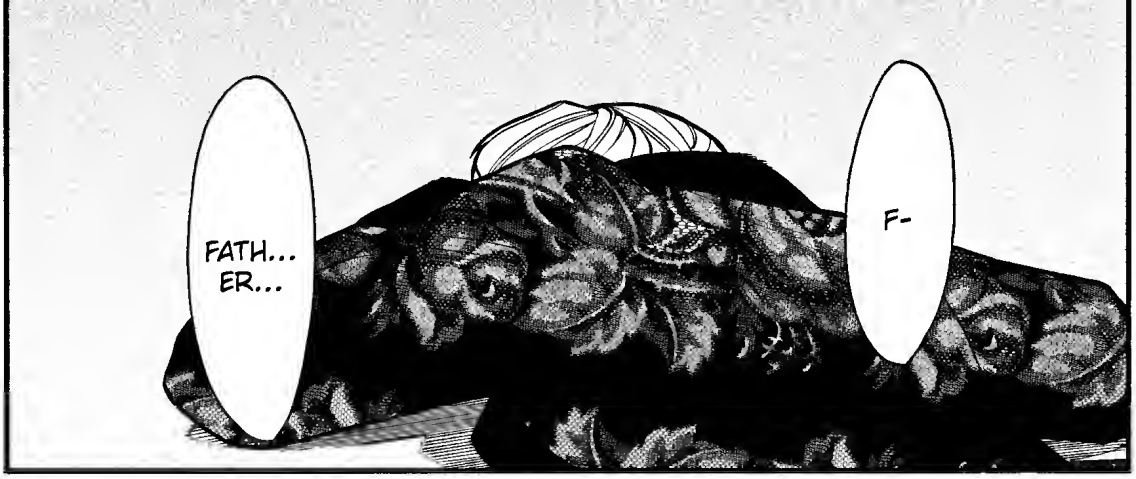
I'M NOT SUKEYO FUCHI...
AND I'M NOT IZANA.
TH-THAT WOMAN ...
DESERVED TO DIE.
WHACK
AGH!


YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING BUT LIE ON YOUR BACK.
YOU'RE DEFECTIVE GOODS WITH A FALSE VENEER!

DAMN IT...
THAT WAS ENOUGH.
I NEED A DRINK.

I WAS SURE...
THAT HE'D BE WANTING "SUKEYO FUCHI" MORE AND MORE EACH DAY...
AND THE MOMENT I REALIZED THAT...
ドカ!!
GAH!
THUMP
THIS DAMN LEG.
UGH ...

PANT
PANT
PANT
THWACK
PANT
LEFT ME.
PANT
REASON
...


FATH...
ER...
F-

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

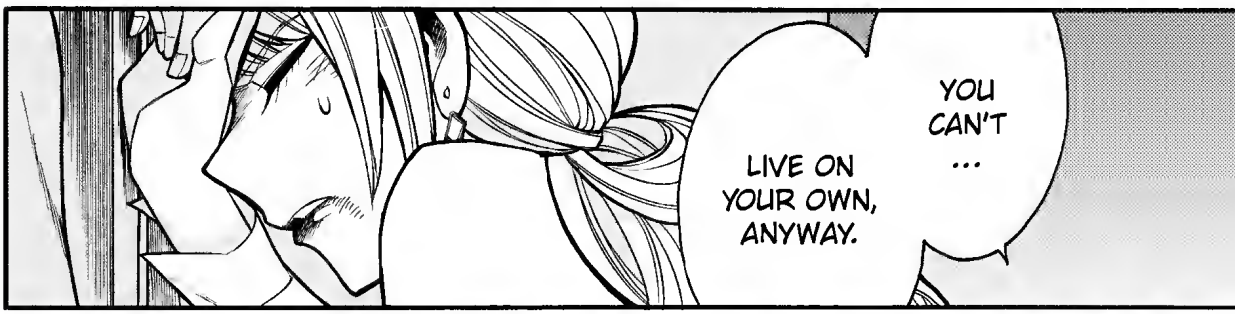
HUFF

NOGIKU
...

TAKE YOUR OWN FACE,
YOUR OWN VOICE,
AND GO WHEREVER YOU WANT TO GO.
LIVE LIKE YOU WANT TO LIVE.
I...

SUKEYO.
ARE YOU TRY-ING ... TO LEAVE ...?
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING ... GETTING DRESSED?

JERK
URK!


YOU CAN'T ...
LIVE ON YOUR OWN, ANYWAY.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE MONEY OR TRANS-PORTA-TION
GIVE IT UP.

THERE'S NO ONE OUT THERE WHO KNOWS YOU...
YOU'RE NOT EVEN A REGIS-TERED CITIZEN.

NO MATTER HOW HARD THE LIFE WAITING FOR ME OUT THERE IS...
IT'S A THOUSAND TIMES BETTER THAN BEING HERE WITH YOU.
YOU'RE ...
SO MUCH MORE FORTUNATE THAN YOUR SISTER, THOUGH.

KASANE
...

YOU HAVE AN OLDER SISTER ...
HER NAME IS...

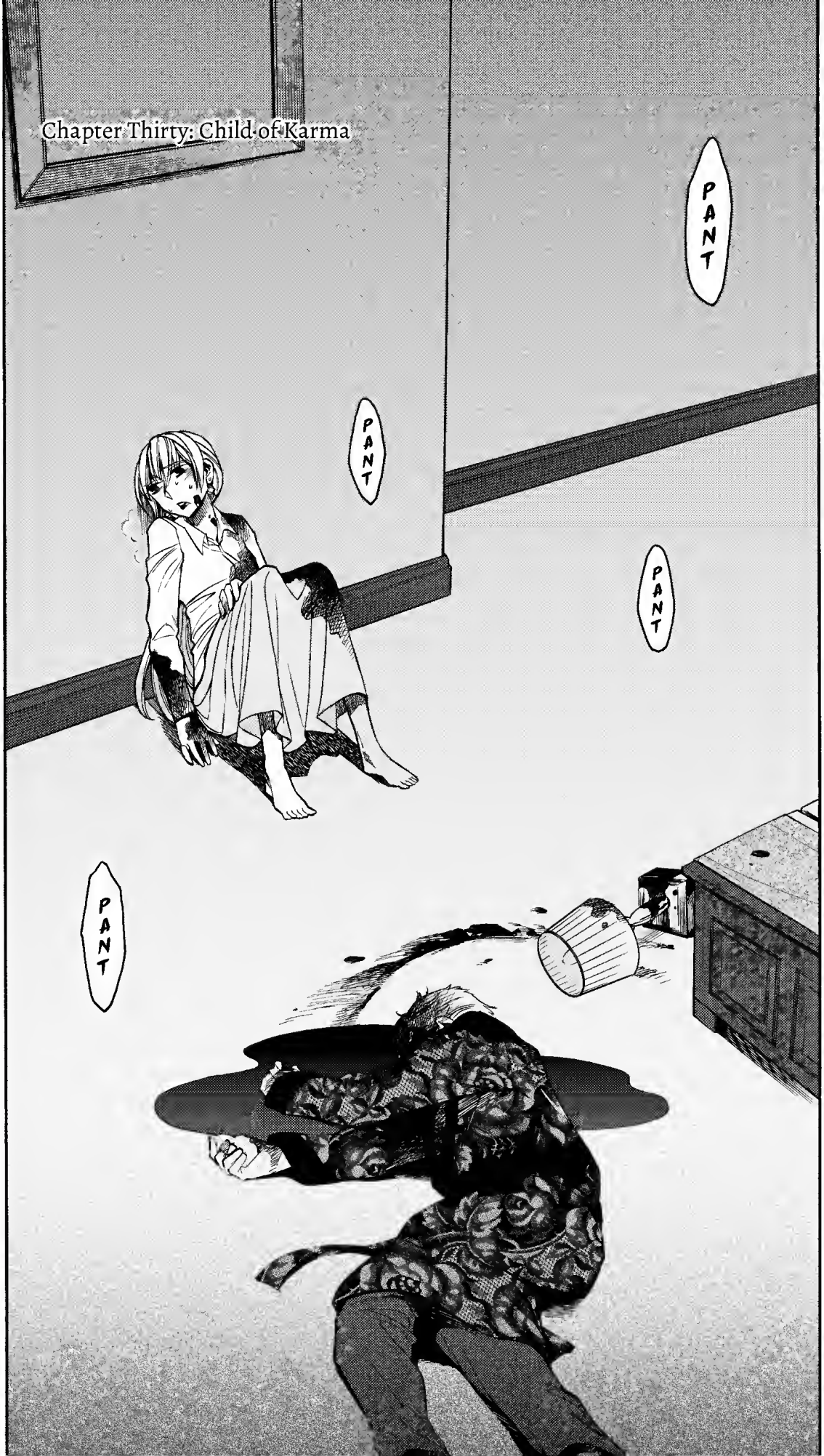
SISTER?

YES. FROM DIFFERENT MOTHERS.
SHE WAS MINE AND IZANA'S CHILD...
AN ABOM-INABLE GIRL,
NAUSE-ATINGLY UGLY.

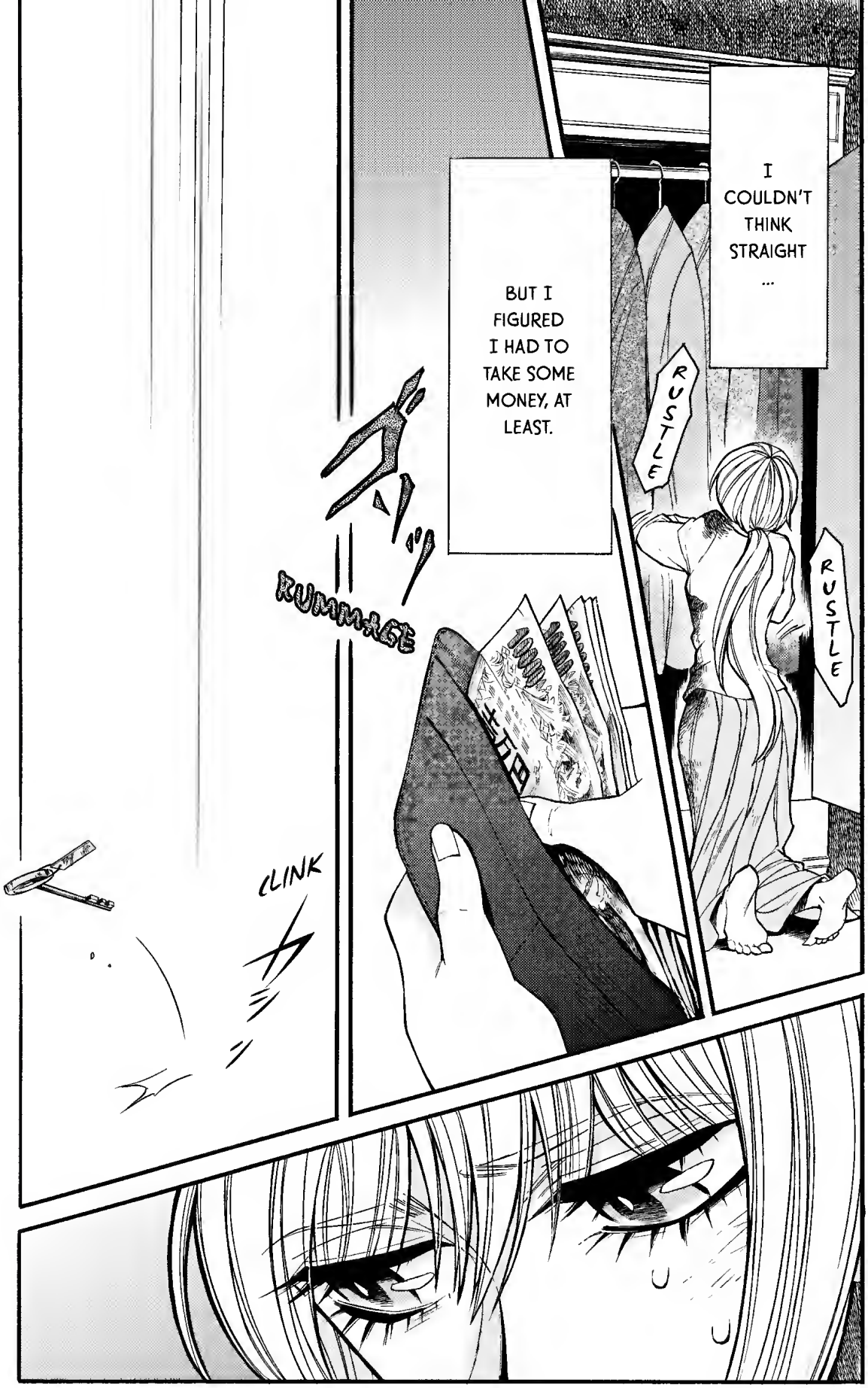
THAT'S WHY I GOT RID OF HER,
AND CHOSE YOU, THE BEAUTIFUL ONE.

IF YOU MEET KASANE, YOU'LL UNDER-STAND JUST ... HOW LUCKY YOU'VE BEEN.
URK ...
MY VISION... IS DIMMING ...
S-STOP TRYING TO GO.
AT LEAST LET ME SEE YOU UP CLOSE ...
ONE MORE TIME ...
SHOW ME THAT BEAUTIFUL FACE.
MY FATHER ...

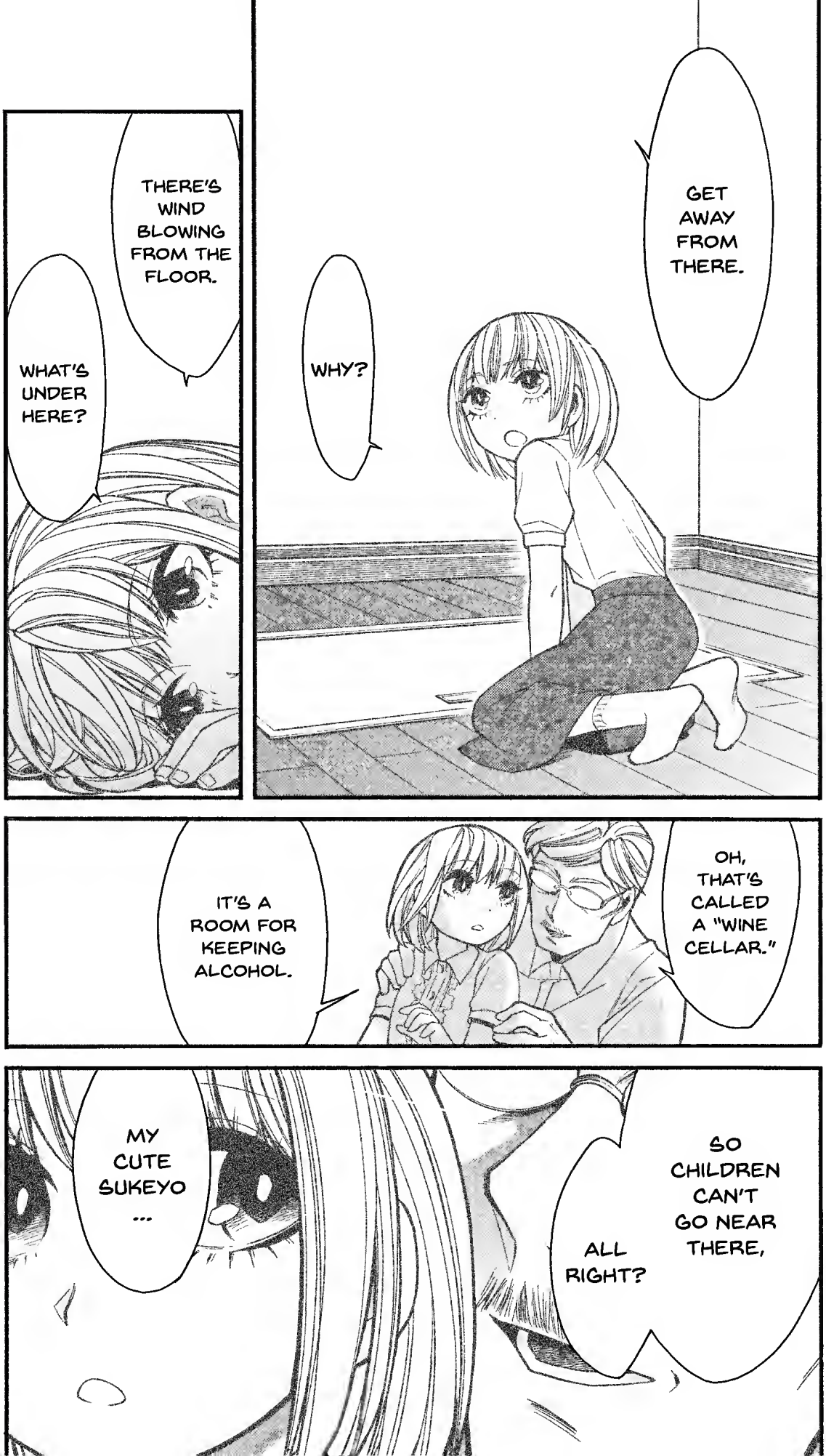
Chapter Twenty-Nine: the end


Chapter Thirty: Child of Karma
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT

SWAY
GASP
URK!
BLEAH!
BLAGH!
PANT
PANT


I COULDN'T THINK STRAIGHT ...
BUT I FIGURED I HAD TO TAKE SOME MONEY, AT LEAST.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUMMAGE
CLINK

A KEY?
R/F
THE BASE-MENT?
WAIT...
SUKE-YO.

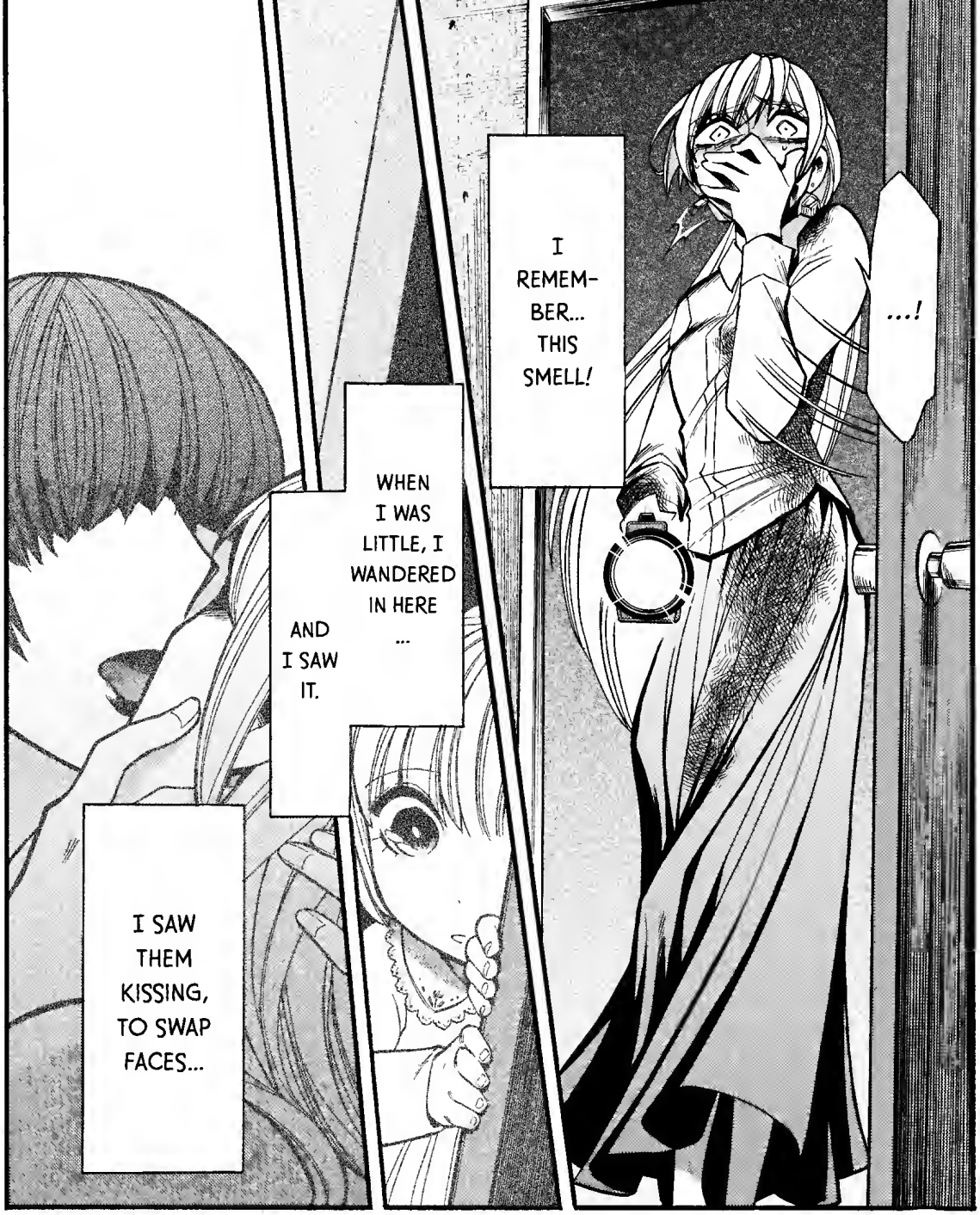

GET AWAY FROM THERE.
WHY?
THERE'S WIND BLOWING FROM THE FLOOR.
WHAT'S UNDER HERE?
OH, THAT'S CALLED A "WINE CELLAR."
IT'S A ROOM FOR KEEPING ALCOHOL.
SO CHILDREN CAN'T GO NEAR THERE, ALL RIGHT?
MY CUTE SUKEYO ...

A WINE CELLAR?
BUT...
I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BRING ALCOHOL OUT OF THERE, EVEN ONCE.
AND WHY WOULD HE PUT A KEY LIKE THAT YOU'D HARDLY USE...
INSIDE HIS WALLET, ANYWAY?
I HAVE AN IDEA AS TO WHY.

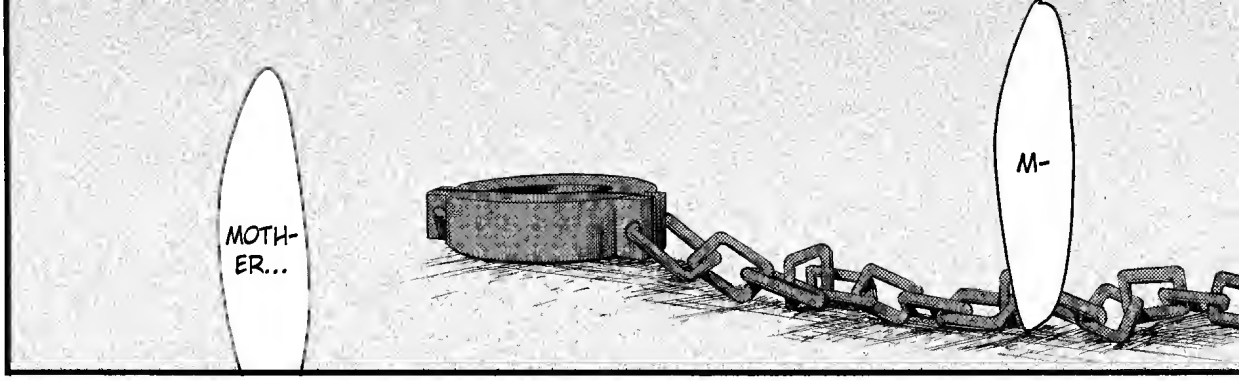
I BEGAN LIVING WITH MY MOTHER IN THIS HOUSE WHEN I WAS FIVE YEARS OLD.
NO-GIKU.
I WAS IN... A VERY SCARY PLACE, BEFORE SHE DIED.
A SCARY PLACE?
YES.

IT WAS... SMALL... AND DARK...
AND VERY LONELY.
I FELT SOMETHING CLOSE TO CONVICTION.

WHY DOES THIS PLACE ...
FEEL SO FAMIL-IAR?
DO I KNOW THIS PLACE?
GASP
Hi,
YES... THIS DOOR ...
THIS WAS THAT DOOR.


...!
I REMEMBER... THIS SMELL!
WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I WANDERED IN HERE ...
AND I SAW IT.
I SAW THEM KISSING, TO SWAP FACES...

I SAW HER KISSING MY MOTHER, IN CHAINS!


M-
MOTH-
ER...

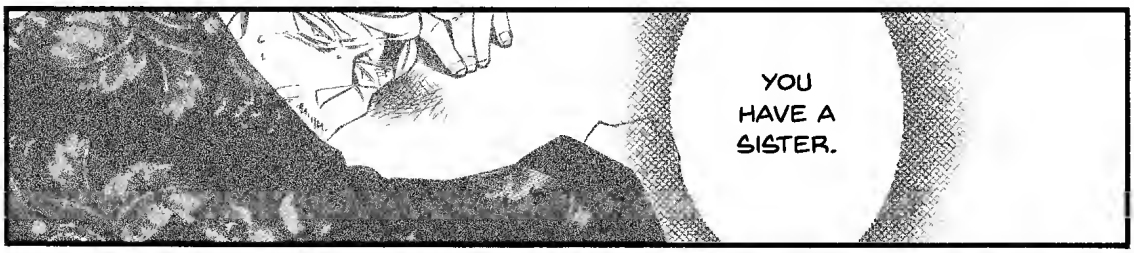
HOW MANY YEARS ...
DID YOU SPEND ALONE ...
IN THIS DARK, DIRTY, WINDOW-LESS ROOM?

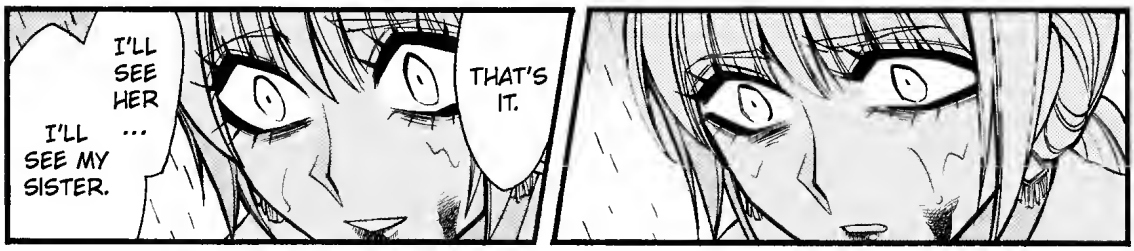
THIS IS WHAT LEFT YOU SO WEAKENED ...

CLUNK
SOB
SOB
SOB
SLAM
IZANA IS DEAD,
AND I'VE KILLED MY FATHER, TOO.
BUT...

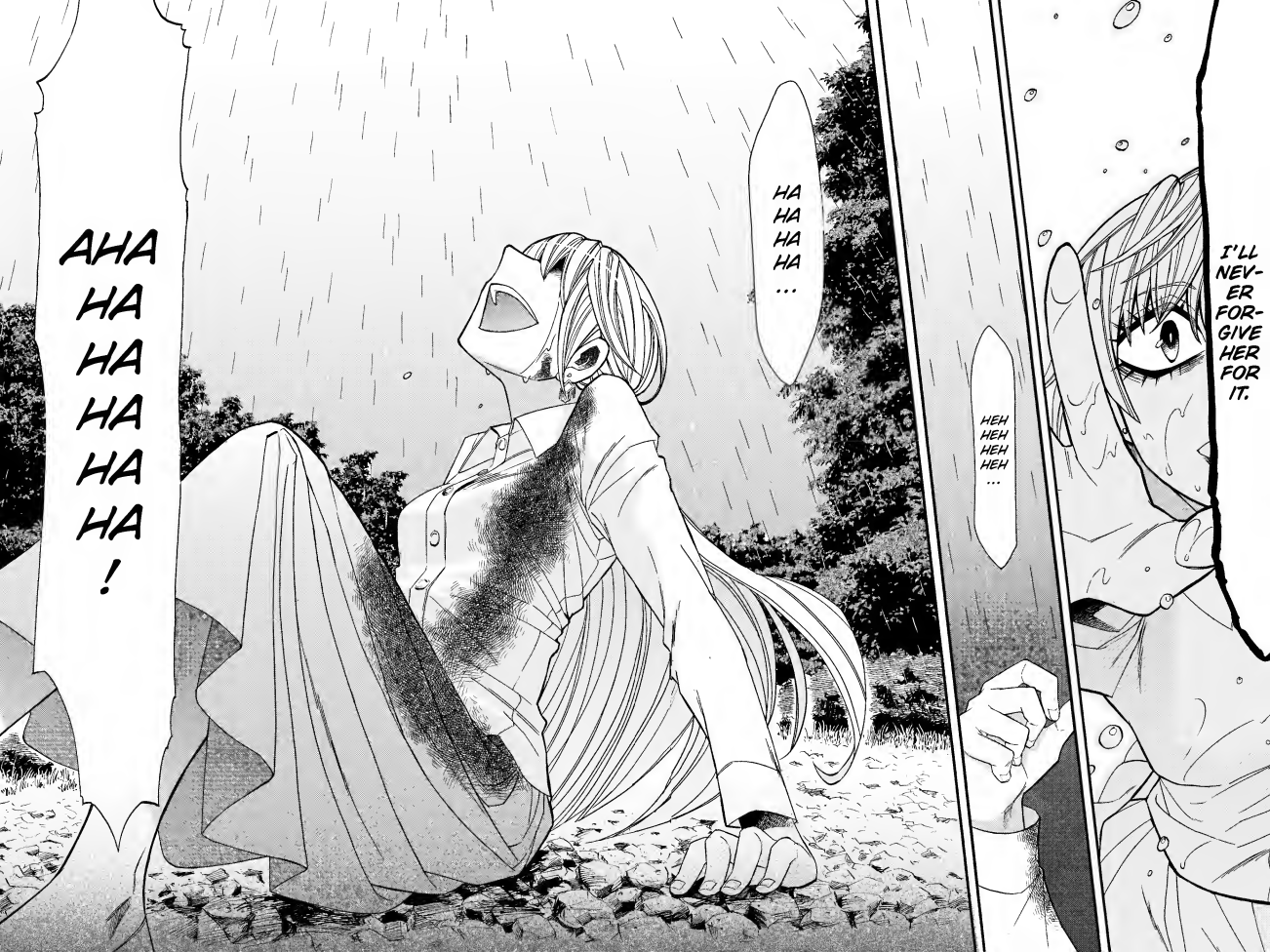
IT WON'T GO AWAY.
CATCH
SPLASH
...
WHERE DO I PUT MY ANGER NOW?!

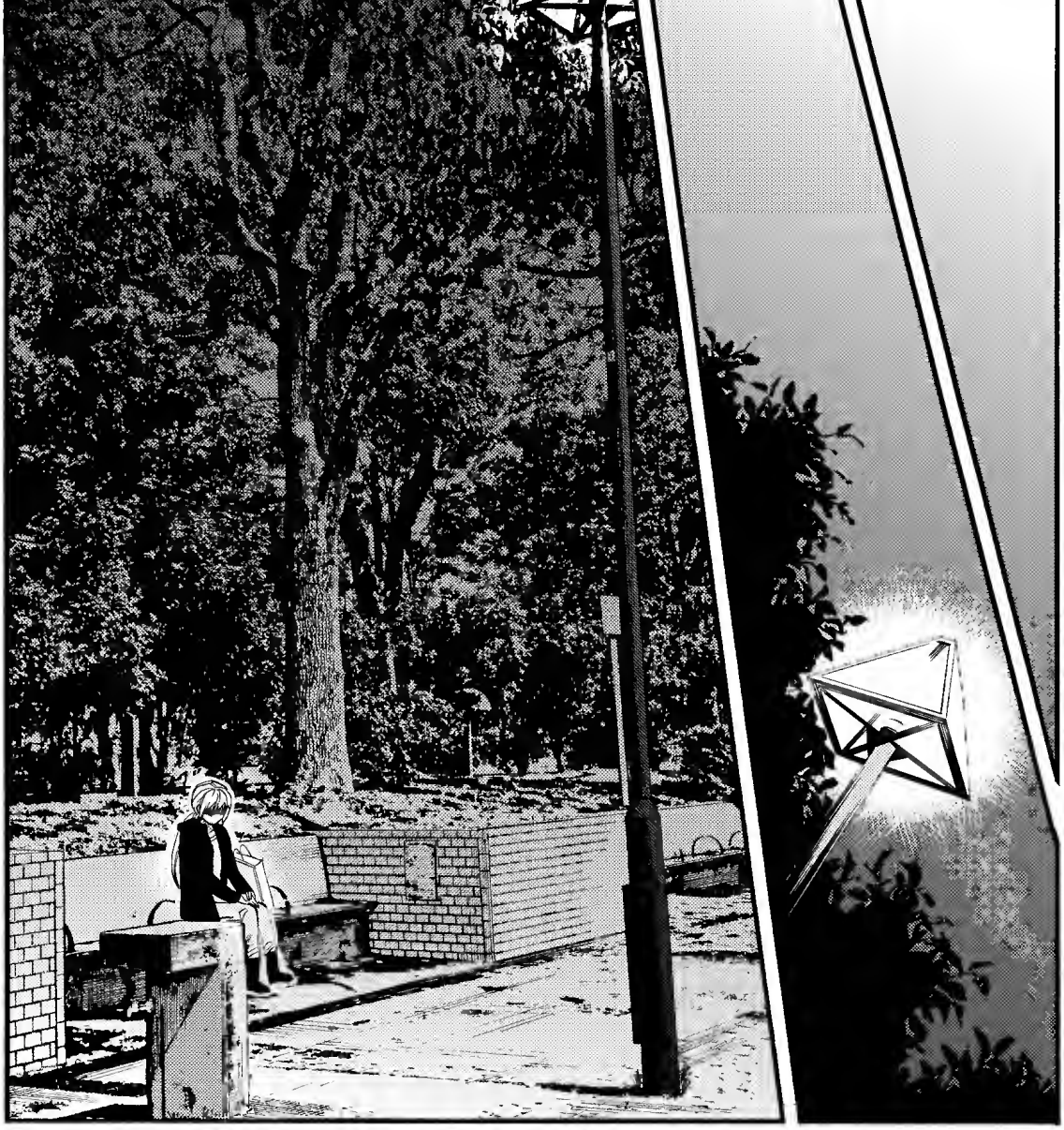
FROM THAT HELL ...
SPLOOSH
I'VE FINALLY ESCAPED ...


YOU HAVE A SISTER.


I'LL SEE MY SISTER.
I'LL SEE HER ...
THAT'S IT.

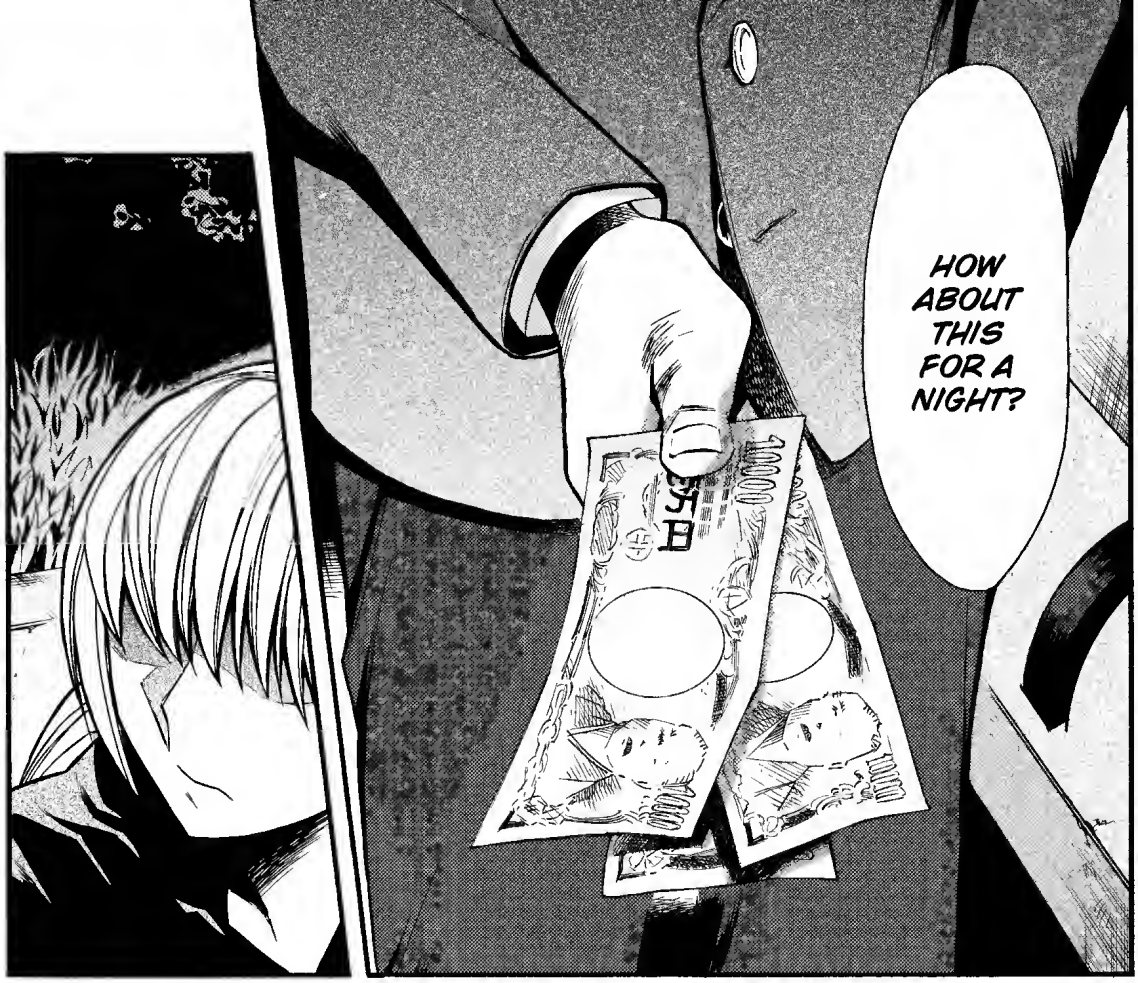
IF HER LIFE HAS BEEN HAPPIER THAN MINE AND MY MOTHER'S ...
HEH HEH HEH
IZANA'S DAUGHTER...
I WONDER WHAT SHE'S LIKE?


I'LL NEVER FORGIVE HER FOR IT.
HEH HEH HEH HEH ...
HA HA HA HA ...
AHA HA HA HA HA HA !



MY FATHER TOLD ME...

I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO LIVE OUTSIDE, BUT...
YOU'RE REALLY PRETTY.


HOW ABOUT THIS FOR A NIGHT?

SMILE

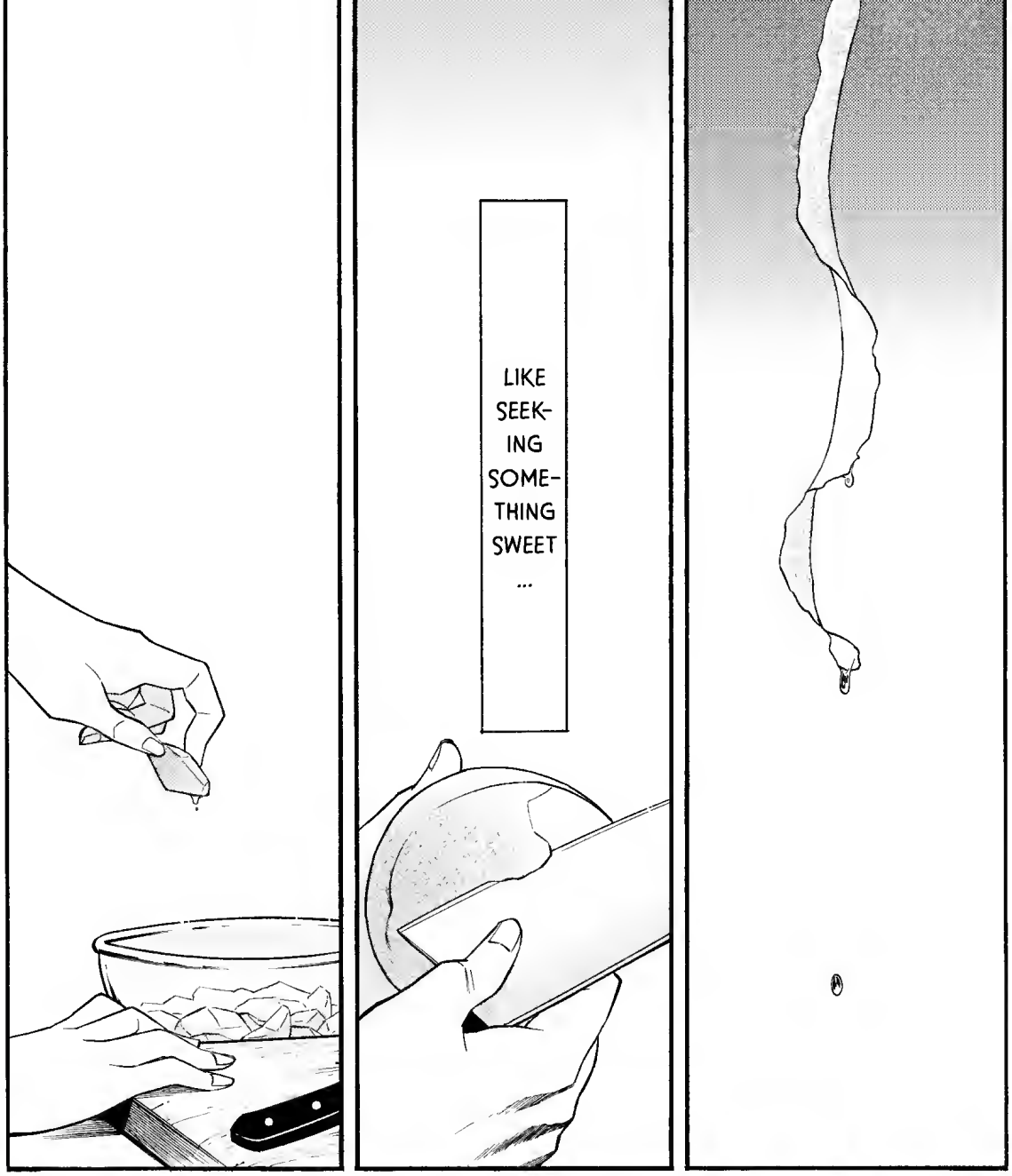
NO MATTER HOW I HAVE TO LIVE...

Chapter Thirty: the end

# Chapter Thirty-One: Want

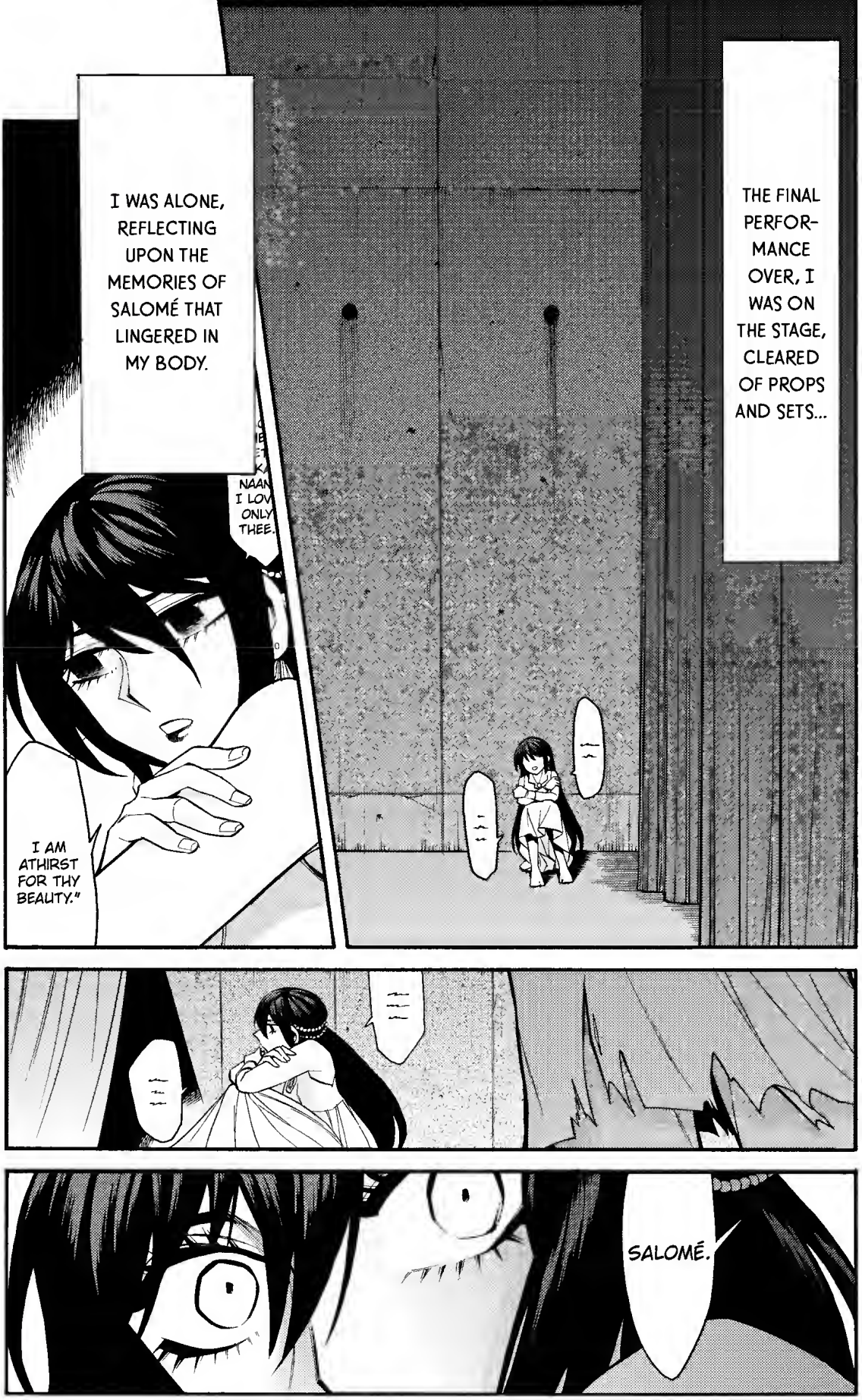
IT'S LIKE DRINKING WATER...

WHEN YOU'RE THIRSTY.

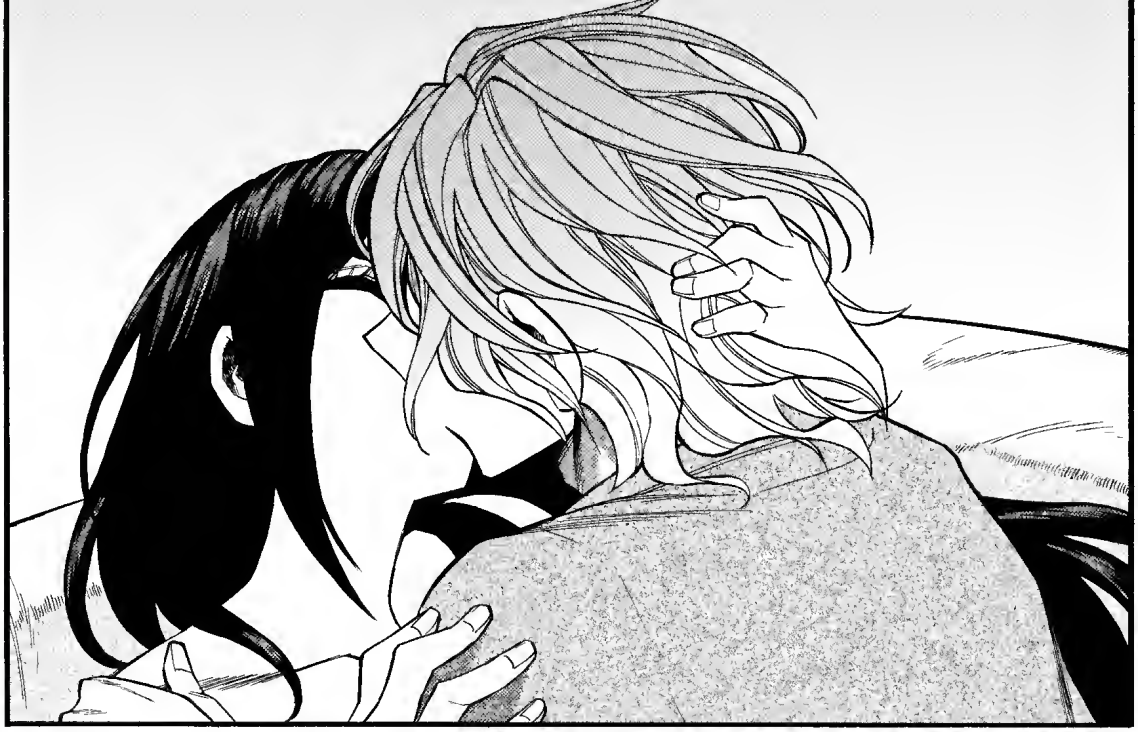

LIKE SEEK-ING SOME-THING SWEET ...

BECAUSE YOUR TONGUE WANTS IT.

NEENA.
YOU'RE SO IMPATIENT!
BECAUSE YOU'RE TAKING TOO LONG.
I'M DONE SLICING, SO I'LL BRING IT IN.
ON THE FINAL DAY OF *SALOMÉ* ...


THE FINAL PERFOR-MANCE OVER, I WAS ON THE STAGE, CLEARED OF PROPS AND SETS...
I WAS ALONE, REFLECTING UPON THE MEMORIES OF SALOMÉ THAT LINGERED IN MY BODY.
I LOV
ONLY
THEE.
I AM athirst FOR THY BEAUTY."
SALOMÉ.

EVEN WITHOUT WORDS ...
FROM THE MOMENT OUR EYES MET DURING THE APPLAUSE AFTER THE FIRST PERFORMANCE...
I THINK I KNEW THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN.



I'D FELT TOWARD UGOU-SAN.

I DIDN'T HAVE THE SAME KIND OF PASSION...

HEY, WHY WERE YOU SO HARSH WITH ME DURING THE REHEARSALS FOR *SALOMÉ*?

BECAUSE I WAS FRUSTRATED.

I COULD TELL THAT YOU HAD TALENT, BUT IT SEEMED LIKE YOUR LOOKS HAD MADE YOU ARROGANT, AND YOU WERE SLACKING OFF.

NOW, HOWEVER, I CAN ACKNOWLEDGE YOU AS AN ACTOR.

YES ...

I RESPECT YOU AS AN ACTOR, TOO.

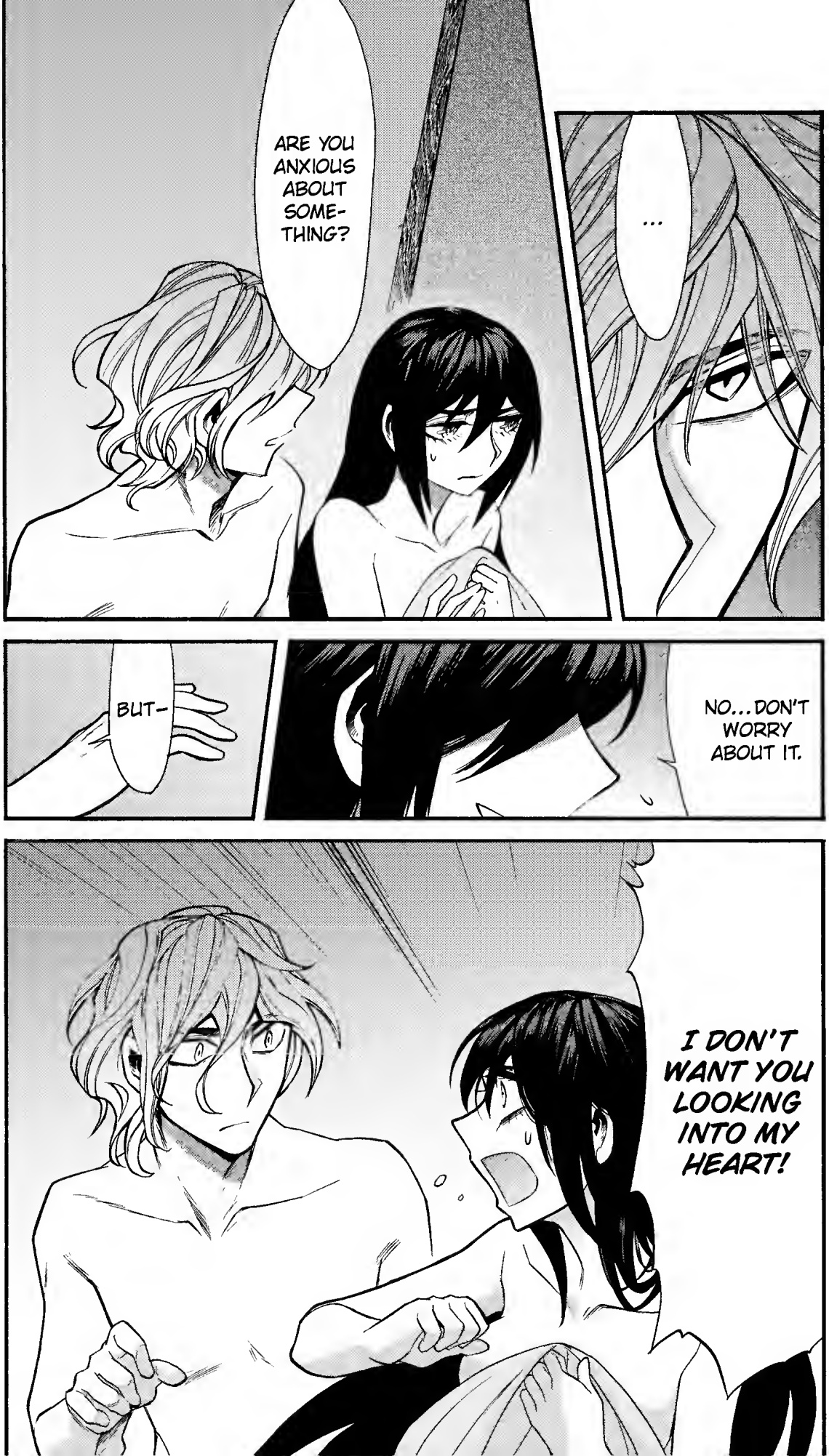
BUT RIGHT NOW,
MAYBE THAT'S THE ONLY REASON IT'S YOU.
DRINKING EACH OTHER IN...
EATING EACH OTHER,
PUTS MY HEART AT EASE.
THIS MOMENT OF SIMPLE SUPERFICIAL CARESS...
I CAN'T LET MYSELF THINK ABOUT...

HOW THIS RAW SATIS-FACTION ...
IS BASED ON A LIE.
I CAN'T THINK ABOUT IT.
THESE SWEET WORDS CAN SLIDE OFF MY TONGUE ...
BECAUSE I'M YOUR EQUAL.
THAT'S WHY WE CAN CONVERSE SO PLAYFULLY.

YOU'D NEVER IMAGINE THOSE WORDS ACTUALLY CAME FROM THE MOUTH OF A HIDEOUS MONSTER.

LEAP

PANT
WHAT IS IT?
PANT
I...HAD A BAD DREAM.

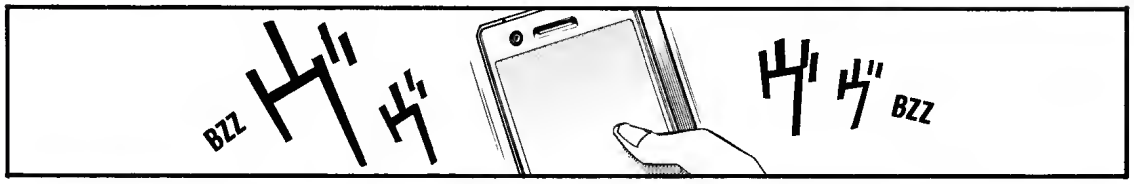

ARE YOU ANXIOUS ABOUT SOME-THING?
...
BUT-
NO...DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I DON'T WANT YOU LOOKING INTO MY HEART!

ONLY WHAT YOU CAN SEE...
PLEASE ...
AND WHAT YOU CAN FEEL ARE REAL.

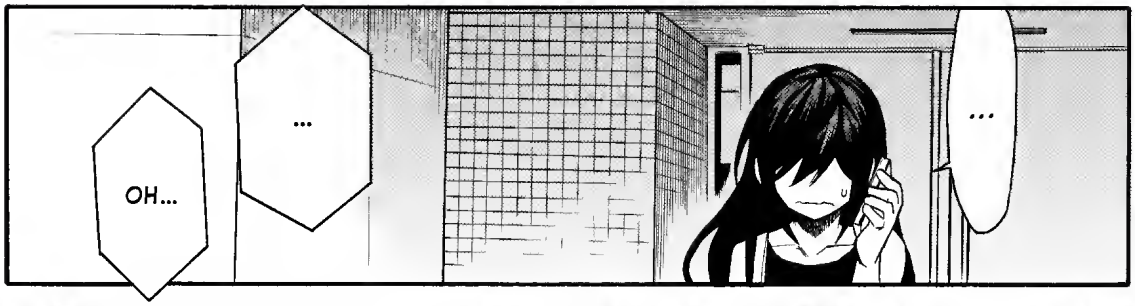
JUST LOOK AT WHAT'S ON THE SURFACE.

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN CALL THIS EMPTY THING LOVE.
JUST...

I WAS NEVER EVEN TREATED LIKE A WOMAN BEFORE ...
AND NOW, HERE, I'M LOVED AND FULFILLED.
I CAN'T LET GO OF THIS HAPPINESS.


BZZ
BZZ

HA-BUTA-SAN?
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN PICKING UP THE DAMN PHONE SINCE YESTERDAY. I CALLED YOUR CELL AND YOUR HOME.
WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?


...
...
OH...

I GET IT.
UH-HUH.
Oh, Kasane-chan.
STAYING OUT ALL NIGHT? I ENVY YOU.
I'M HANG-ING UP.
HOLD ON, HOLD ON.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

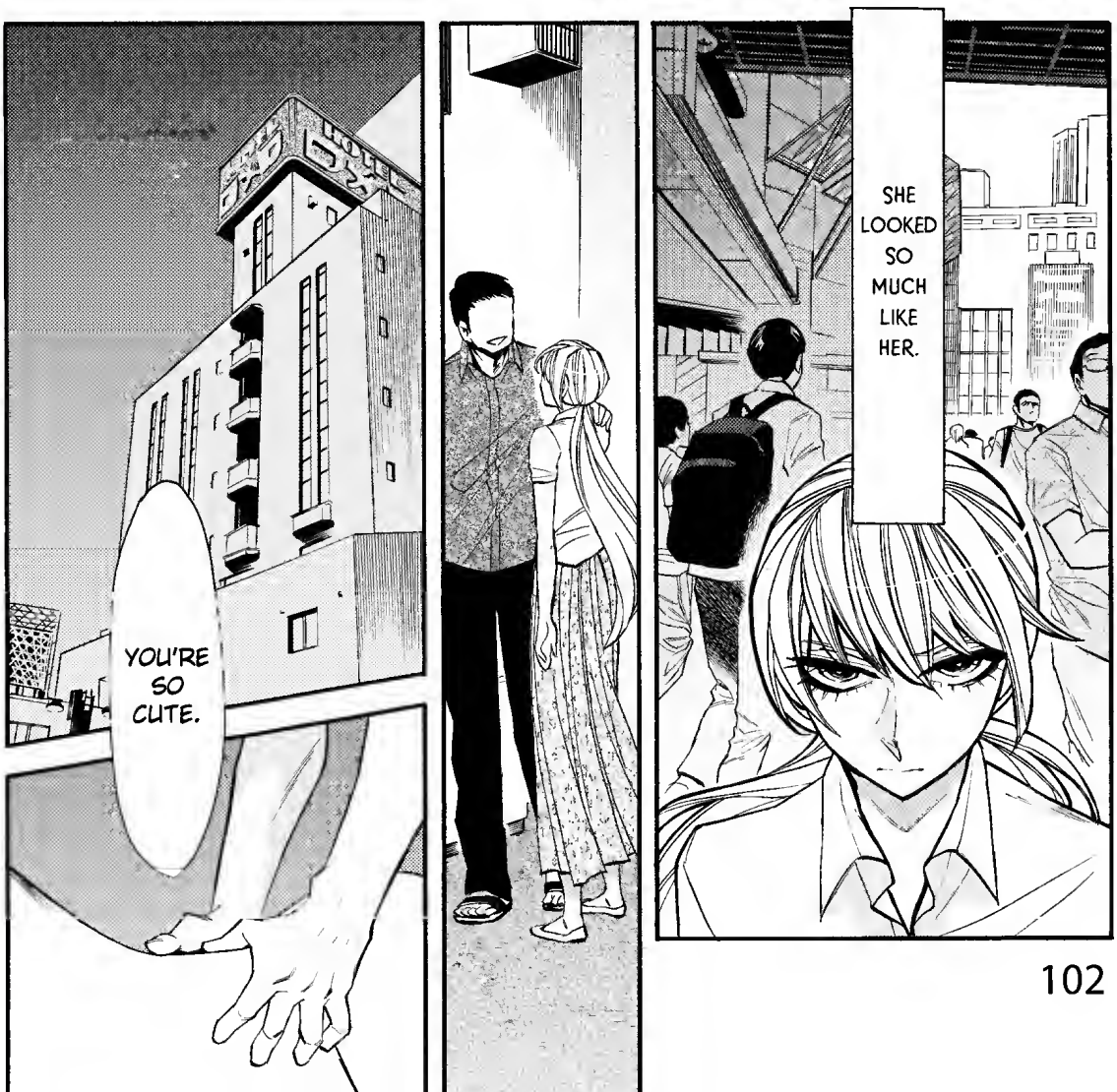
OH, IT'S ABOUT YOUR NEXT SHOW...

HABUTA-
SAN?

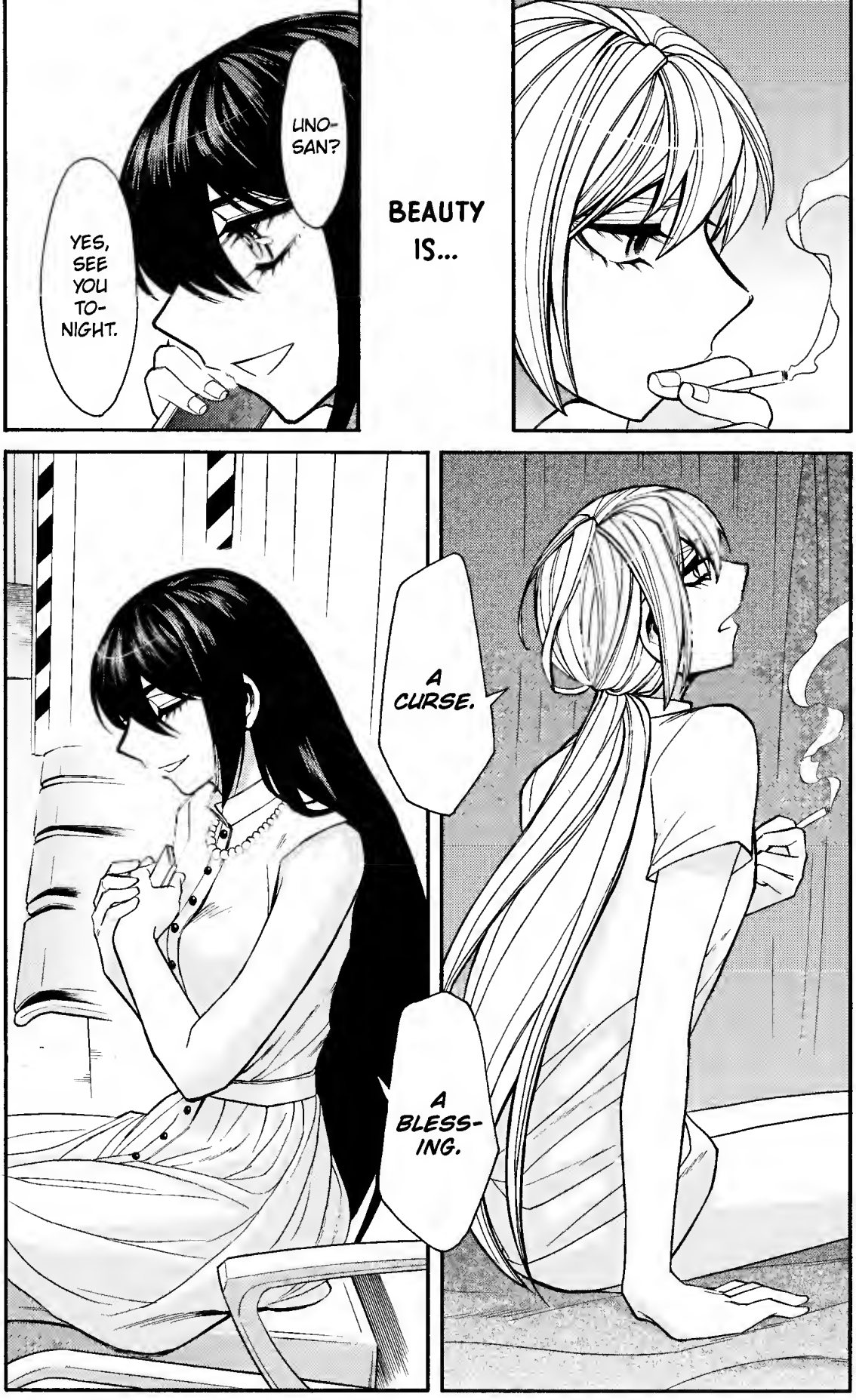
I-IZA...
HUH?
SORRY. I'LL CALL YOU LATER.
HEY!
BEEP
IT CAN'T BE...
THERE'S NO WAY...
I KNOW THAT, BUT STILL...

WHAT?
OH... NOTH-ING.
SHIT.
AM I JUST...
HALLUCI-NATING, BECAUSE I WANT TO SEE HER SO BADLY?

NO...THERE WAS JUST SOMEONE WHO HAPPENED TO LOOK LIKE A YOUNGER VERSION OF HER.
BUT STILL ...


SHE LOOKED SO MUCH LIKE HER.
YOU'RE SO CUTE.

SHUT UP.
YOU HAVE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL BODY.
ARE SLEAZY MEN WHO CONSUME ME FOR THEIR UGLY PLEASURE.
PANT
PANT
ALL THAT BEAUTY BRINGS TO ME...
IT MAKES ME SICK.
カチッ
FLICK
I HAVE TO SURVIVE BY OFFERING MYSELF TO THE FLIES THAT GATHER AROUND MY FACE.
BUT NOW,


UNO-SAN?
YES, SEE YOU TO-NIGHT.
BEAUTY IS...
A CURSE.
A BLESS-ING.

Chapter Thirty-Two: In the Darkness Between

RING
ガチャッ
CLACK
WHAT A RACKET.
FUCHI RESI-DENCE.
...
?
HELLO?
U-UM ...
DOES KASANE FUCHI-SAN LIVE THERE?

A MAN'S VOICE?
SHE DOESN'T LIVE AT THIS ADDRESS, NO.
OH...
I'D LIKE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HER...
MAY I ASK WHO IS CALLING?
I SEE ...
...
...
I'M SORRY!
I'LL CALL YOU LATER!
CLICK
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

OH, IT'S YOU.
HUH? A CALL?
YES, FROM A STRANGE MAN.
IT'S NOT SOME FAN OF YOURS, IS IT?
BUT... HE WANTED TO GET IN CONTACT WITH KASANE, RIGHT?
I CAN'T THINK OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS ANYONE COULD HAVE WITH HER.
YES, SINCE SHE WAS YOUR ASSISTANT, WASN'T SHE?
I THINK THAT STRANGE MAN MUST HAVE WANTED TO KNOW YOUR ADDRESS.

IS THERE SOMEONE WHO'S FIGURED OUT MY SECRET?
IT COULDN'T BE...
UH-HUH.
IT'S A BOTHER TO GET STRANGE CALLS HERE ON YOUR BEHALF.
NEENA'S ADDRESS?
WAS THAT REALLY WHAT HE WANTED?
NO... THAT COULDN'T BE.
A CALL FROM A STRANGE MAN?
YES.
HEY,
IS THERE REALLY NO ONE ELSE WHO KNOWS ABOUT THE LIPSTICK AND MY MOTHER'S SECRET?
...

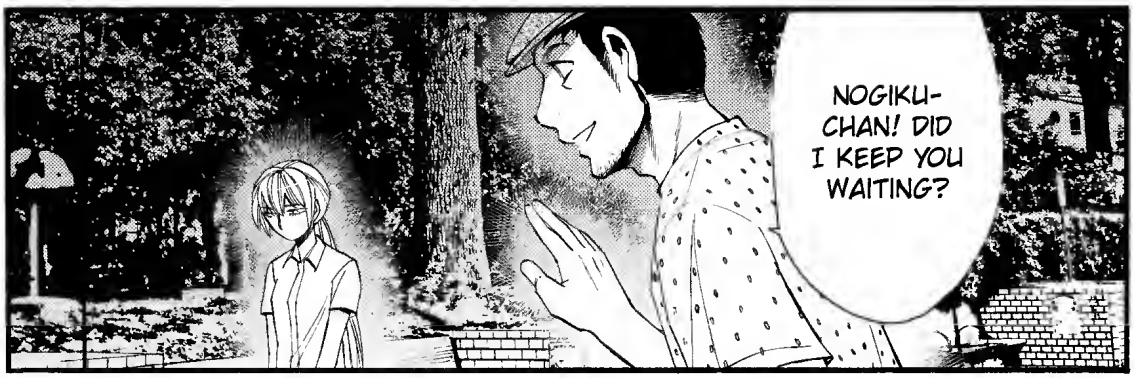
YOU'RE SURE THE CALL WAS FROM A MAN?
YES, THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID.
I'LL LOOK INTO IT.
JUST BE MORE CAUTIOUS AROUND OTHER PEOPLE RIGHT NOW.
DON'T SLIP UP JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE INTO A GUY.
I DON'T NEED TO HEAR ANY OF THAT FROM YOU!
I WON'T.
FLASH
OTHER PEOPLE, HUH...

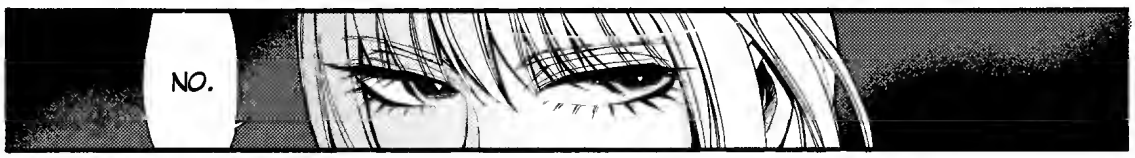
"WHERE IS MY JOURNEY HEADED? PERHAPS I'M LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO DIE, IF ANYTHING.
JUST AS A CAT LEAVES ITS MASTER WHEN IT KNOWS ITS DEATH IS NIGH, YOU KNOW?"
THIS MAY BE JUST ONE PERFORMANCE, BUT THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ITS PRODUCTION...
NOT TO MEN-TION...
ALL OF THE PEOPLE FILLING EVERY SEAT IN THE AUDIENCE!

I MAY ACTUALLY GET SOME CALLS FROM STALKER FANS.
THERE HAVE BEEN MORE FANS WAITING FOR ME OUTSIDE, RECENTLY.
NEENA-CHAN!
GREEN ROOM

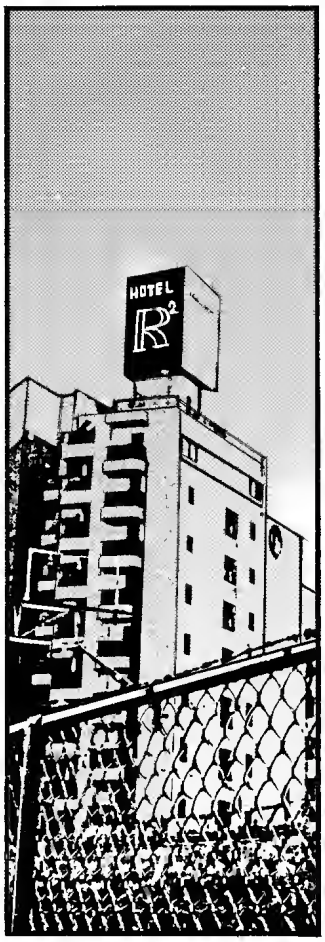
JUST...
SEE YOU!
SEE YOU, NEENA-CHAN!

EVEN IF THAT MEANS I MUST DECEIVE EVERY SINGLE PERSON IN THE WORLD.
I CAN'T LET ANYONE TOUCH MY SECRET...
NO MATTER WHAT THE PERSON LOOKING FOR ME WANTS...


NOGIKU-CHAN! DID I KEEP YOU WAITING?

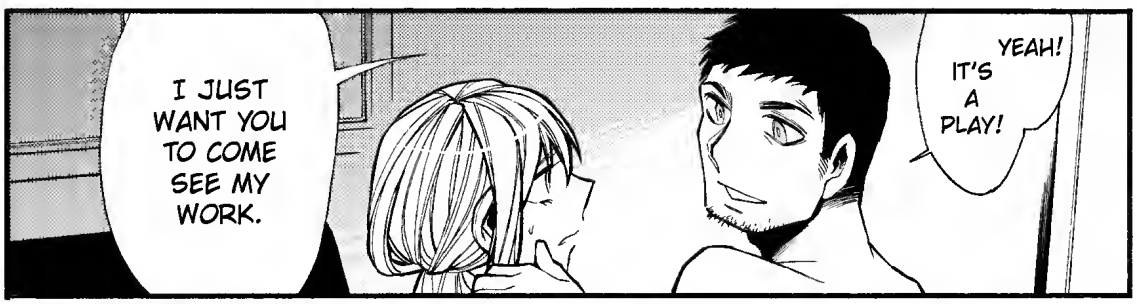

NO.

HEY, HOW MANY CLIENTS DO YOU HAVE?
HUH?


HOTEL
R²

BUT THERE'S SOMEONE WAITING AFTER ME, RIGHT?
HUH ?
NOT THAT MANY.

WELL, YEAH, TODAY.
DO YOU GO ON DATES WITH HIM DURING THE DAY?
YOU'VE TURNED ME DOWN A BUNCH OF TIMES.
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT INVITING ME ON A DATE, SUGANUMA-SAN.


YEAH! IT'S A PLAY!
I JUST WANT YOU TO COME SEE MY WORK.

BECAUSE THIS ONE REALLY IS PARTI-CULARLY AMAZING!
NO... I'M JUST NOT THAT INTO THEATER ...
I'LL TREAT YOU TO SOME-THING NICE AFTER, TOO.
I DON'T WANT TO SEE IT.

I DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT ANYONE PRETEND-ING TO BE SOMEONE THEY'RE NOT!
OH...
UM,
I'M SORRY.
HA HA.
NO, I'M SORRY.
I DON'T WANT TO FORCE YOU INTO IT.
YOU'RE THE SPITTING IMAGE OF SUKEYO FUCHI...
BUT YOU SAID YOU'VE NEVER SEEN HER ACT, RIGHT?

SHE'S GONE, AND THERE'S NOT MANY VIDEOS OF HER AROUND,
BUT THERE'S ANOTH-ER NEW ACTRESS WHO COULD GIVE HER A RUN FOR HER MONEY.
SHE'S PLAYING THE LEAD IN THIS ONE. NEENA TANZAWA.
NEENA TAN-ZAWA?
THE ONE MY FATHER WAS RAVING ABOUT, FROM *SALOME*?
HOW DISGUSTING.
SEEING HER UP CLOSE REALLY IS AMAZING.
WHEN YOU'RE TALKING TO HER, NORMALLY, SHE COMES OFF AS SO QUIET AND RESERVED.
BUT THE MOMENT SHE STANDS UNDER THE SPOT-LIGHT...

SHE EXPRESSES EVERYTHING ABOUT THAT CHARACTER'S LIFE: THEIR JOY, THEIR SORROW.
SHE TURNS INTO SOMEONE ELSE, AS IF THE WOMAN WHO WAS THERE A SECOND AGO NEVER EXISTED.


SHE'S LIKE THE SECOND COMING OF SUKEYO FUCHI.


SEE *HER* IN THIS NEENA TANZAWA'S ACTING.
THIS MAN AND MY FATHER BOTH...

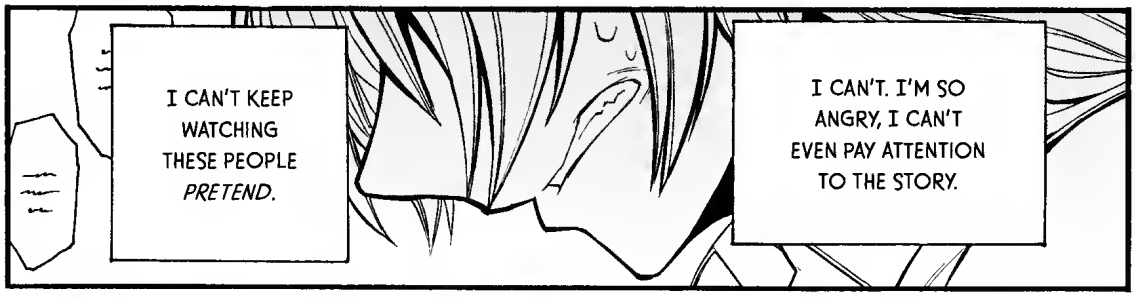
HUH?
OH, I'M SORRY.
I WAS REALLY BAB-BLING.
MAY-BE I'LL SEE IT.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO PRAISE IT THAT HIGHLY...
...

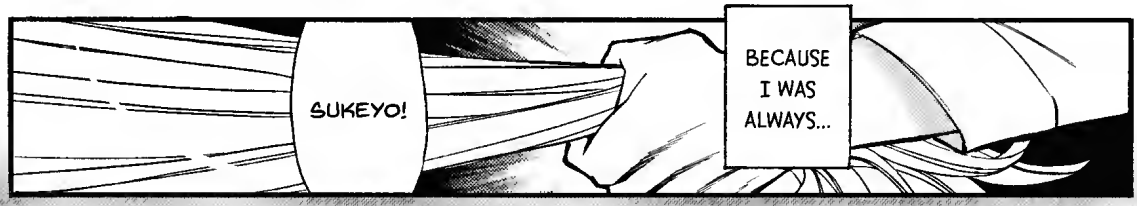
IT'S MADE ME WANT TO SEE ...
JUST WHAT THIS ACTRESS CALLED "THE SECOND COMING OF SUKEYO FUCHI" IS LIKE.

"HEY, GUYS. I'VE ACTUALLY FALLEN FOR THIS GIRL..."

"ROSA, I'M SURE."
"HOW DID YOU KNOW ?!"
THEIR GESTURES AND SPEECH ARE SO EXAGGERATED...
"BECAUSE IT'S NOT JUST YOU. WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT HER."
AS THEY PRETEND TO BE AND TALK ABOUT CHARACTERS WHO AREN'T EVEN REAL.
"THAT BEAUTY JUST SHOWED UP A FEW DAYS AGO,
AND EVERY-ONE'S HEAD OVER HEELS FOR HER AL-READY."
AND SO MANY PEOPLE...
HAVE GATHERED TO SEE THIS FABRICATION, TOO.
MUTTER
WHAT A DISGUSTING PLACE.

"SHE'S LIKE A FREE-WHEELING STRAY CAT, A DANDELION SEED ON THE WIND."
"BUT SHE CALLED HERSELF SOMETHING, I REMEMBER...
ROOT-LESS GRASS, SHE SAID."
"ROOT-LESS GRASS?"
"YEAH, AND SHE..."
...


I CAN'T KEEP WATCHING THESE PEOPLE *PRETEND*.
I CAN'T. I'M SO ANGRY, I CAN'T EVEN PAY ATTENTION TO THE STORY.


SUKEYO!
BECAUSE I WAS ALWAYS...

WHY DON'T YOU GET IT?! SUKEYO DOESN'T WALK LIKE THAT!
I-I'M SORRY...
YOUR VOICE, AND THE WAY YOU TALK ARE WRONG!
THE WAY SHE SPOKE WAS MORE REFINED, MORE NOBLE!
BUT... I CAN'T...
DON'T YOU TALK BACK TO ME!

CLENCH
IT ONLY FEELS DISGUSTING AND UNCOM-FORTABLE TO ME!
BEING FORCED TO KEEP "ACTING."

I CAN'T TAKE THIS.
STAND
NEENA TANZAWA WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE LEAD, BUT SHE ISN'T EVEN HERE YET.
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME, AFTER ALL.
WATCH YOUR STEP, NEENA-CHAN.
OKAY.

HEY, DON'T ACTORS FIND THIS SORT OF ENTRANCE FROM THE AUDIENCE SIDE...
SORT OF SCARY?
NOT AT ALL. IT'S ACTUALLY MORE EXCITING.
ONCE WE'RE OUT OF THIS DARKNESS ...
I CAN TAKE IN THE WHOLE AUDIENCE.
TAP
TAP
I ACTUALLY FEEL SUFFOCATED ...

OUT INTO THE SWEET LIE...
BEING A PART OF THAT WORTH-LESS LIE.
CREAK
Chapter Thirty-Two: the end

キィ
CREEEAK

SOME PEOPLE MUST COME IN HALFWAY, I GUESS.
SOME-ONE'S THERE?
...

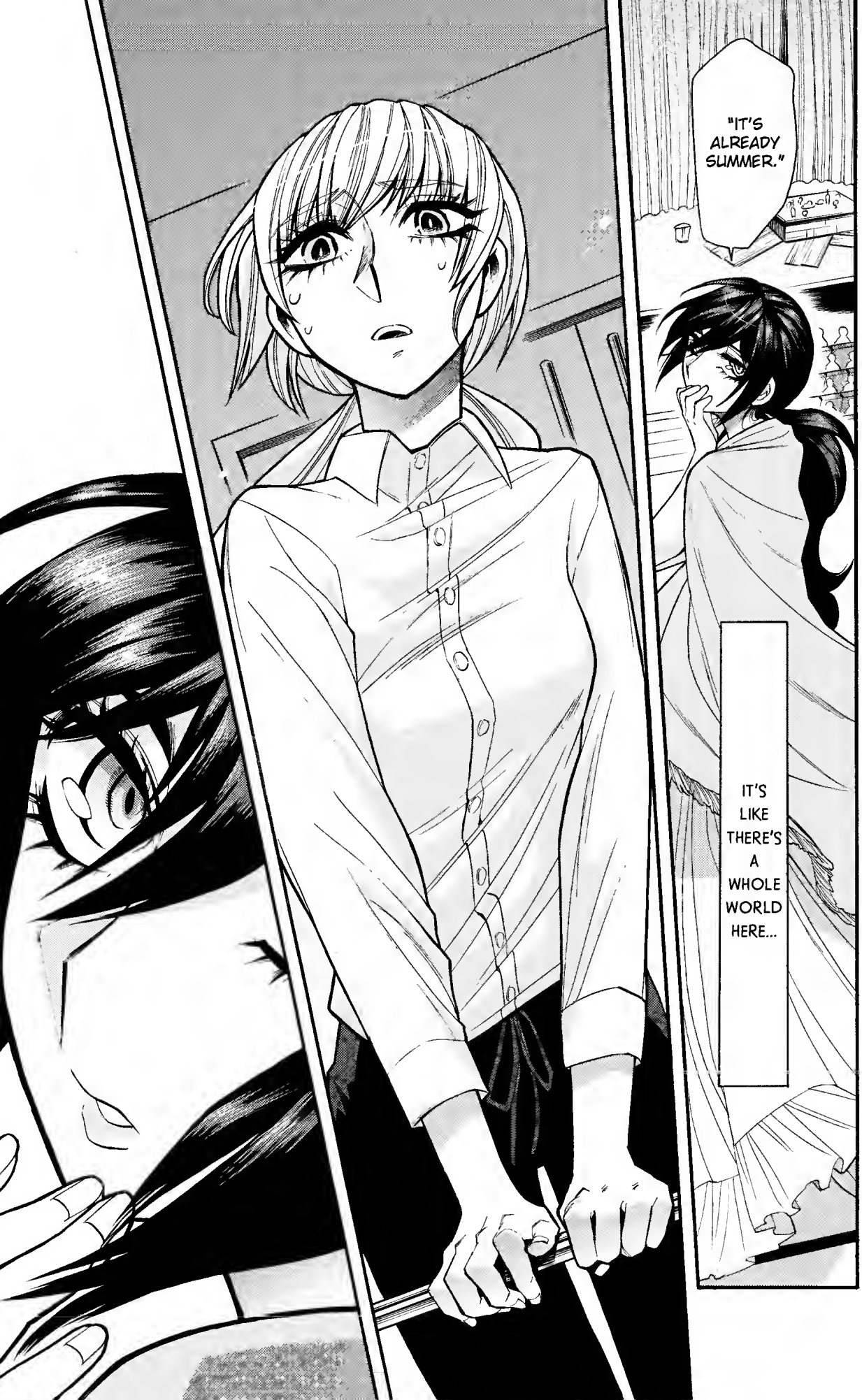
!
IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR ME TO GO OUT.

NEENA TANZAWA ?!

SHIVER
FLOAT
"THE HEART OF THE MIGRATORY BIRD LIES IN THE SOUTH, AS THE HEART OF THE RIVER LIES IN THE DISTANT SEA."
IT WASN'T JUST LIKE... HER EXPRESSION CHANGED.
IT WAS SOMEHOW ...

AS IF...
SHE BECAME AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PERSON.
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP

FWOOO
AND THAT'S NOT ALL.
IT'S LIKE THERE REALLY IS A BREEZE...
"WHAT A DEEP GREEN."
AS IF I CAN REALLY SEE THE GRASS AND TREES SWAYING.


"IT'S ALREADY SUMMER."
IT'S LIKE THERE'S A WHOLE WORLD HERE...

MOM
...
...
?
SHE WAS LOOKING AT ME?
IT WAS AN INSTANT.
FOR SOME REASON, THAT SEEMED TO BE THE ONLY MOMENT HER ACTING HIT A ROUGH SPOT.

BUT ONCE SHE WAS ON STAGE...
EVERYONE WAS DRAWN INTO THE WORLD I HAD THOUGHT OF AS A LIE.
EVEN SOME-ONE WHO'S ALWAYS HATED "ACTING"...

EVEN ME.
!
CLAP
NEENA-CHAN, GREAT JOB OUT THERE!

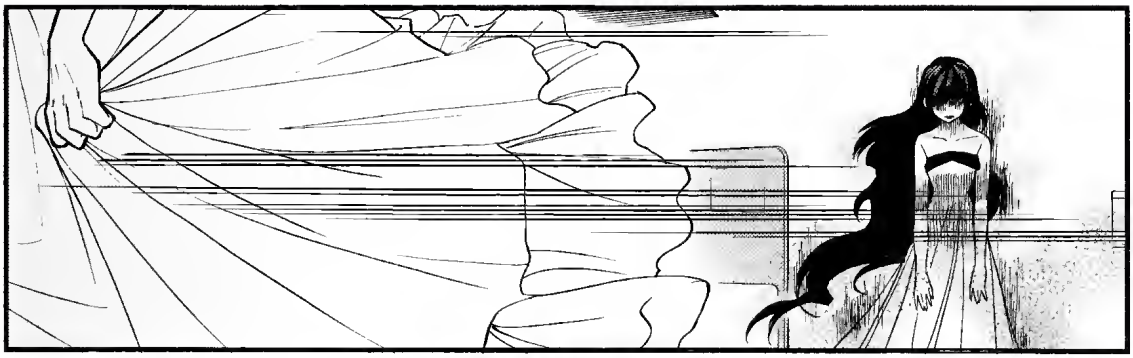
OH, GREAT JOB!
LOST IN THOUGHT?
はっ
GASP
NEENA-CHAN?
Oh!
ARE YOU BOTHERED BY HOW YOU PAUSED FOR AN INSTANT WHEN YOU WERE COMING UP TO THE STAGE?
YES ... I REALLY HAVE TO WATCH OUT NEXT TIME.
THAT MOMENT,
I SAW MY MOTHER AGAIN. AND SO CLEARLY, TOO.

THAT WAS BECAUSE THERE WAS A GUEST STANDING BEHIND THE AUDIENCE SEATS.
SHE LEFT ONCE, BUT THEN CAME BACK.
REALLY ?
SOMEONE ELSE SAW HER?
SO THAT WASN'T A VISION OF MY MOTHER?!
SLAM
NEENA-CHAN?

IF IT WASN'T AN ILLUSION, THEN WHAT WAS IT?
I SWEAR I SAW MY MOTHER IN THE DARKNESS.

PANT
PANT

THERE ARE STILL SOME GUESTS IN THE FOYER.
SHE MIGHT STILL BE...
SHE MIGHT STILL BE AMONG THEM!

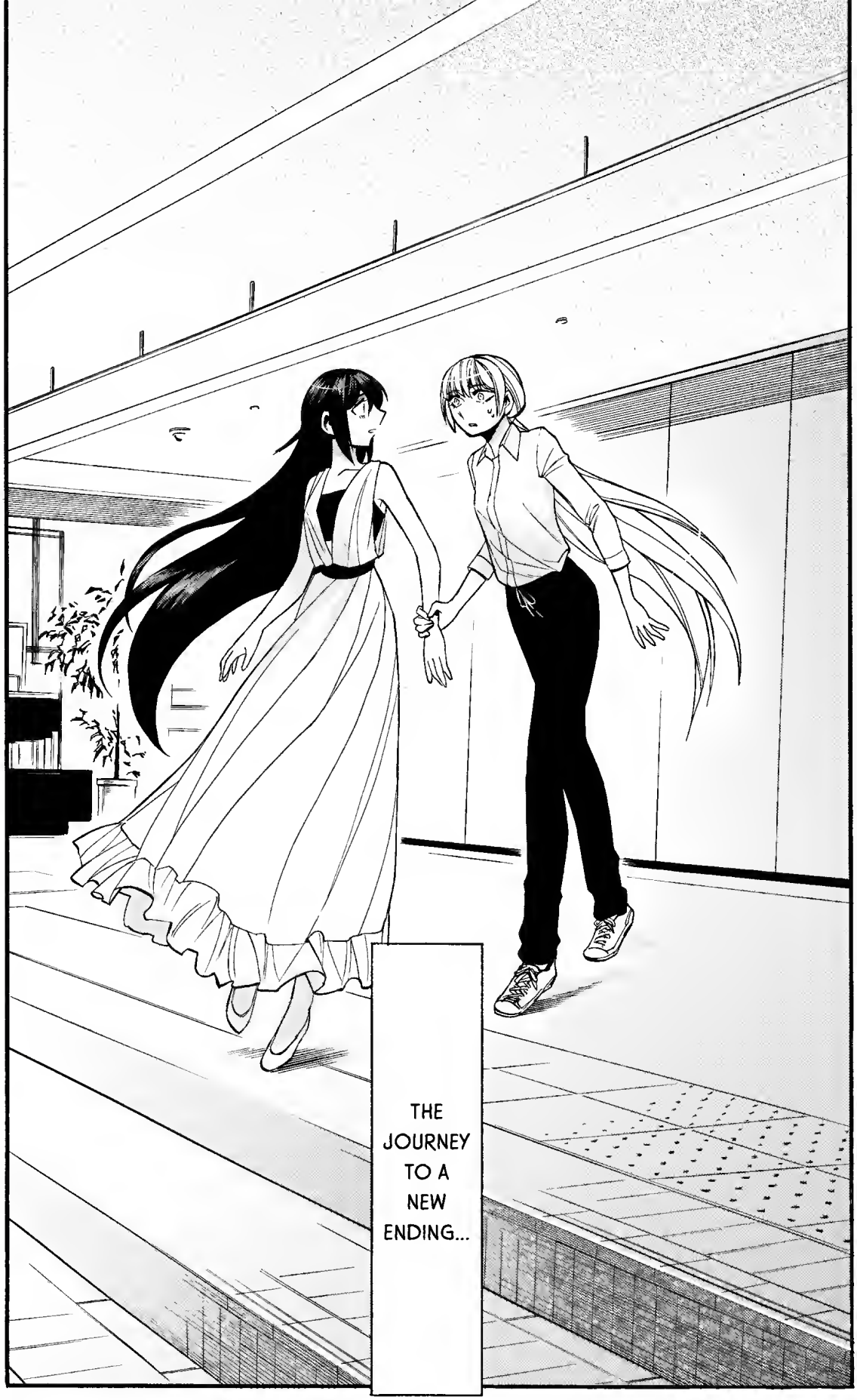


CATCH

AH
...
AND
THEN
...

LIKE SOME-THING FALL-ING...
LIKE SOME-THING WARP-ING...
WATCH OUT!

IT BEGINS:


THE JOURNEY TO A NEW ENDING...

TH-
THANK YOU...

Chapter Thirty-Four: Glass Thread

# KASANE

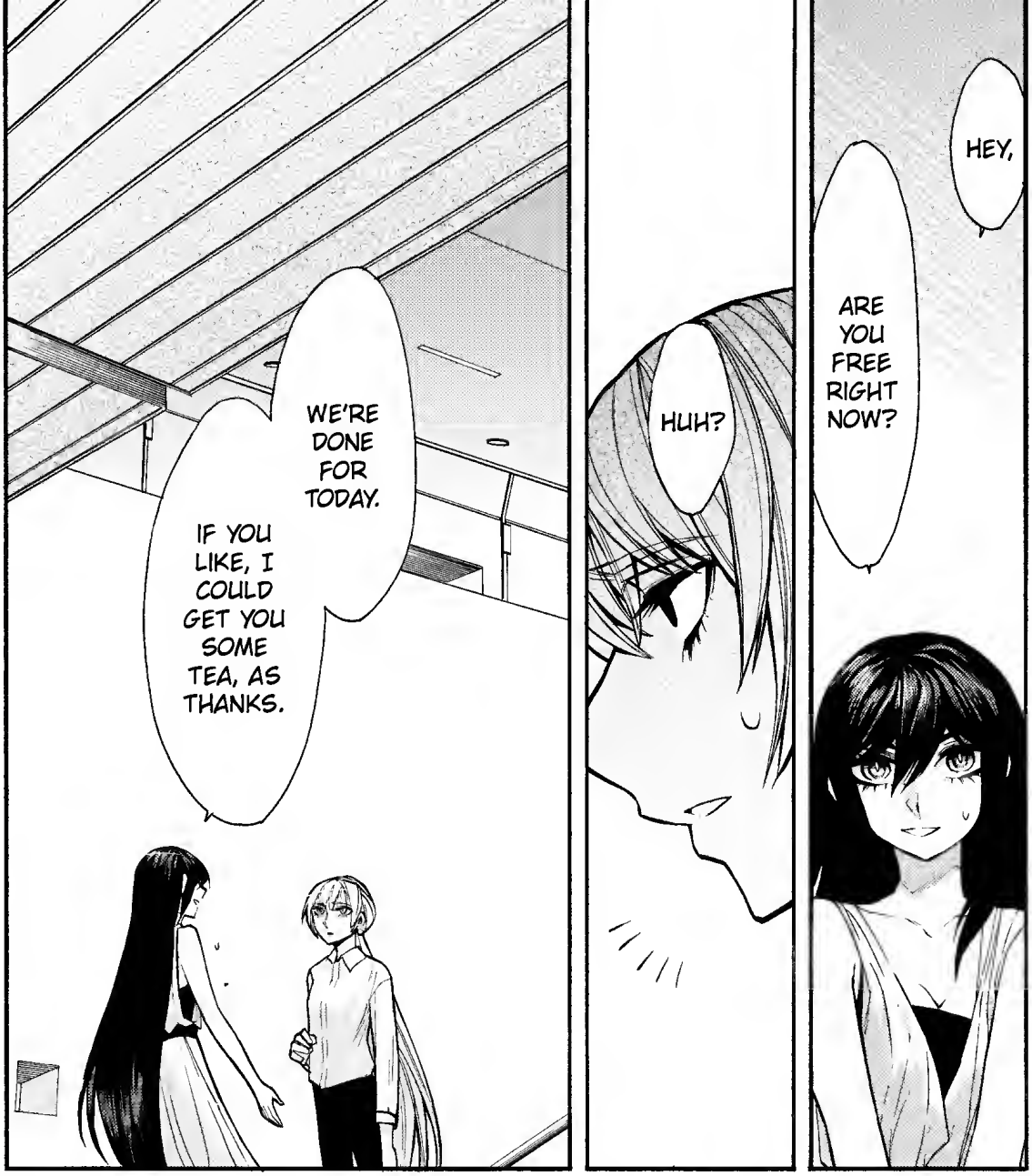
ARE YOU OKAY?
Y-
YES.
SHE LOOKS FAR TOO MUCH LIKE HER! IS THIS EVEN POSSIBLE?
THE MORE I LOOK AT HER, THE MORE SIMILAR SHE SEEMS...

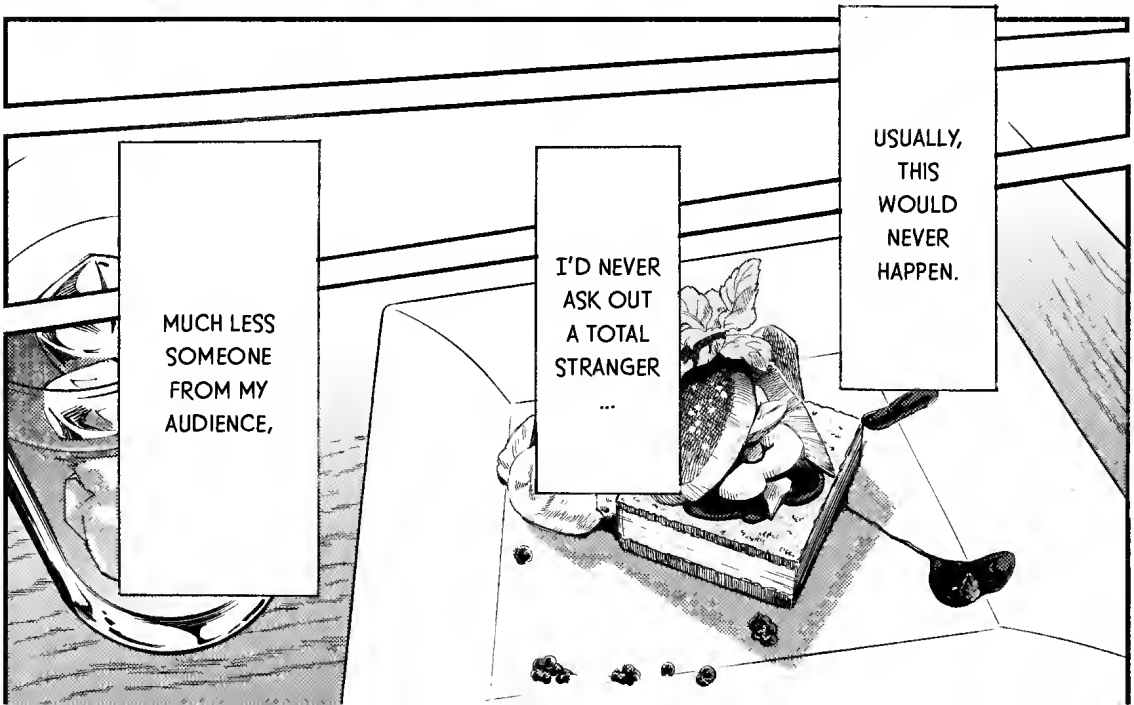
I'LL BE GOING, THEN.
W-WAIT!
YOU'RE THE ONE ...
WHO LEFT DURING THE PER-FORMANCE, BUT THEN CAME BACK, RIGHT?
THANK YOU.
IT WAS NOTH-ING.
JUST...

THE MOMENT I SAW YOU IN THE THEATER,
I COULDN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU.

FOR SOME REASON...
I'M SO GLAD TO HEAR THAT!
REAL-LY?

I HAD THE FEELING...
THAT I HAD TO STOP HER FROM LEAVING, NO MATTER WHAT.


HEY,
ARE YOU FREE RIGHT NOW?
HUH?
WE'RE DONE FOR TODAY.
IF YOU LIKE, I COULD GET YOU SOME TEA, AS THANKS.


USUALLY, THIS WOULD NEVER HAPPEN.
I'D NEVER ASK OUT A TOTAL STRANGER ...
MUCH LESS SOMEONE FROM MY AUDIENCE,

NO MATTER HOW MUCH SHE RESEMBLED MY MOTHER.
...
WHAT'S WRONG?
OH ... NOTHING.
THIS IS JUST THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BEEN INVITED...
TO SUCH A FANCY SHOP.
I DON'T COME HERE OFTEN, EITHER, BUT I FIGURED IT'S NICE TO, SOMETIMES.
BY THE WAY ...
I THINK YOU KNOW, BUT I'M NEENA TANZAWA.
AND YOU ARE?
...

NOGIKU.
...
OH?
THAT'S A NICE NAME.
SHE WON'T REALLY MEET MY EYES.
MAYBE I REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE INVITED HER.
UM...
WHY DID YOU INVITE ME HERE?
...
WELL... BECAUSE YOU SAVED ME FROM THAT FALL!
I WANTED TO THANK YOU.
BUT ... I DIDN'T REALLY DO MUCH.

...
I DON'T KNOW WHEN I LAST HAD CAKE.
I'D FORGOTTEN THAT I LIKE SWEETS.
THIS IS GOOD.
HEY, THE CAKE HERE IS GREAT, ISN'T IT?
DRIP
ME, TOO.

LATELY... I'VE NEVER HAD A MOMENT OF PEACE ...
THIS GIRL ...
OH... I-I'M SORRY.
I SUD-DEN-LY... LET DOWN MY GUARD ... BE-CAUSE... NO ONE'S EVER BEEN THIS KIND TO ME BEFORE.
DRIP
DRIP

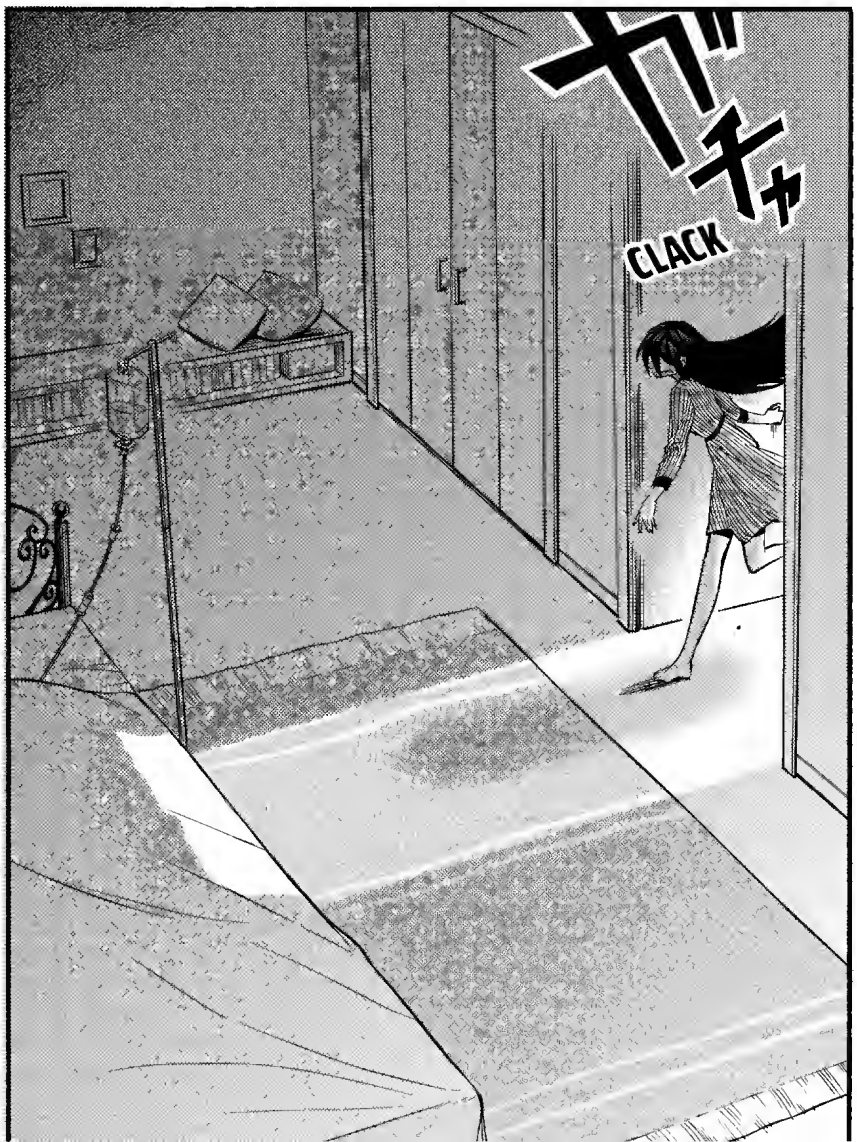
HAS SUCH A RADIANT, BEAUTIFUL FACE...
BUT SUCH A DELICATE HEART.
WHY?
HOW CAN SHE BE SO SAD?
WHY DOES SHE SEEM SO UNCERTAIN OF HERSELF?
SHE'S BOTH BEAUTIFUL AND FRAGILE ...
REACH
JUST LIKE GLASS.

IT'LL GET DIRTY.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SOB
A TWITCH
IT'S AS IF MY MOTHER IS ALIVE, CRYING...
THIS IS EVEN MAKING ME SAD.

AFTER THAT,
AS SHE CALMED DOWN, WE WENT ON TO MORE CASUAL TOPICS.
WE BOTH FELT AWKWARD, SO THERE WERE A LOT OF PAUSES...
BUT WORDS FOLLOWED WORDS ...
AND WE GOT SO INTO TALKING, WE LOST TRACK OF TIME.
OH!
OH, NO!
THE EFFECTS ARE ABOUT TO WEAR OFF!

WE SHOULD PROBABLY CALL IT A DAY.
ガタ
STAND
UM ...
WOULD YOU MIND GIVING ME YOUR NUMBER?

I WANTED TO TALK WITH HER MORE ...
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
IF I JUST DIDN'T HAVE THIS CONSTRAINT ON MY TIME!


ガチャ
CLACK

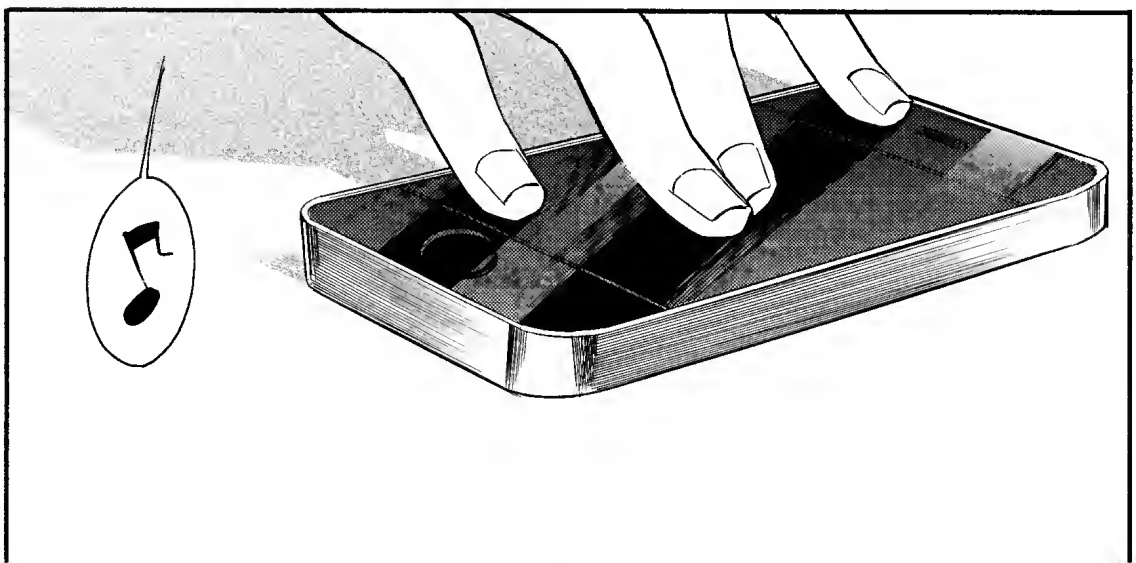
PANT
PANT
PANT
SIGH
CREAK
...
IT'S NEE-NA.
THANKS FOR EARLIER.
BZZZ

I FEEL LIKE WE DIDN'T TALK ENOUGH,
AND, UM...
SO...

WELL, IF YOU DON'T MIND,
DO YOU WANT TO GO SOMEWHERE TOGETHER, SOMETIME?

YEAH, ABSO-LUTELY!
GREAT! THEN I'LL CALL YOU AGAIN, LATER.
SURE.
THIS MUST BE THE FIRST TIME SINCE MY MOTH-ER.
HERS IS PURE KINDNESS, ASKING NOTHING IN RETURN...
UNLIKE THE MEN WHO TREAT ME KINDLY BECAUSE THEY LUST AFTER ME.

BZZZZ
...
BZZZ
HELLO ?
IT'S NOGI-KU.
WHERE ARE YOU NOW?



TEE-HEE!
I WONDER WHERE WE'LL GO?
IT'LL BE MY FIRST TIME GOING OUT WITH A FRIE...
GO ON, BE CONFIDENT!
RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE NEENA TANZAWA!

WOW
...

Chapter Thirty-Five: At the Water's Edge

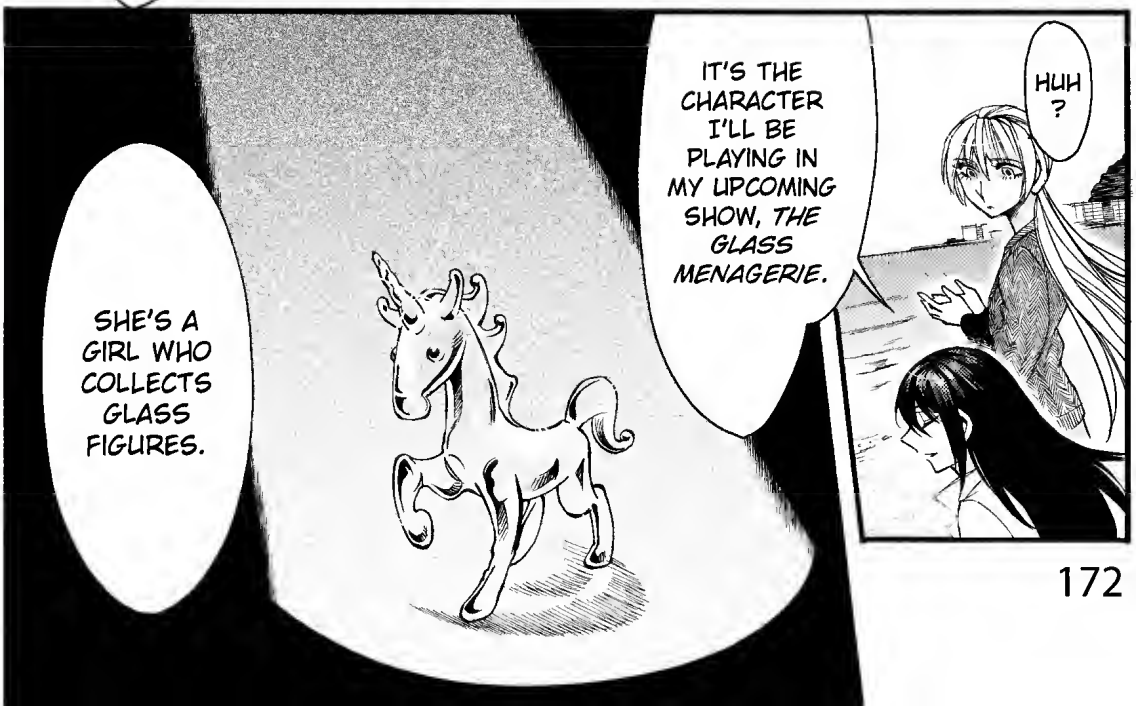
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME... SEEING THE SEA.
O-OH?
WHERE HAS SHE LIVED ALL THIS TIME, THEN?
HER MANNER OF SPEECH AND HER GESTURES...
STRIDE
MAKE HER LOOK AS IF SHE HAD A REALLY GOOD UPBRINGING, THOUGH.
YOU REALLY CAN'T SEE THE END, HUH?
AH!
YOU'LL GET WET!

EEK!
WOOOSH
I'VE RE-TURNED ...
TO THE WATER'S EDGE I RE-MEMBER FROM THAT TIME WITH NEENA.
BUT THIS TIME ...

I BROUGHT A REAL FRIEND.
YEAH. BUT IT WAS SO COLD, I THOUGHT MY HEART WOULD STOP.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
OH!
IF THIS IS ENOUGH TO MAKE YOUR HEART STOP, YOU'RE IN TROUBLE!
TEE-HEE.
THIS IS...MY FIRST TIME SEEING THIS, TOO.
THAT'S SEA-GLASS.
WHAT IS IT?

I KNEW ABOUT IT FROM BOOKS, BUT...
I HAD NO IDEA SOME-THING SO BEAUTIFUL WOULD WASH UP.

A BEAUTIFUL PERSON GAZING AT GLASS...
SHE'S JUST LIKE...
YOU'RE LIKE LAURA.


HUH?
IT'S THE CHARACTER I'LL BE PLAYING IN MY UPCOMING SHOW, *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*.
SHE'S A GIRL WHO COLLECTS GLASS FIGURES.

IS IT A SAD STORY?
WELL ...
SINCE GLASS BREAKS SO EASILY.
YES.
IF I HAD TO CALL IT ANY-THING.
WHY DO YOU ASK?
...
EVEN WHEN SHE SEEMS TO BE ENJOYING HERSELF..
THERE'S SORROW IN HER EYES.
THERE MIGHT BE MORE AROUND HERE.
LET'S LOOK FOR SOME!
EVEN THAT PART OF HER IS SO LIKE LAURA.

SEA-GLASS AND PINK CLAM SHELLS ...
AND THIS FRAGMENT MAY BE CELADON PORCE-LAIN.

BUT IT SEEMED INTEREST-ING.
I DUNNO.
WHAT'S THIS?

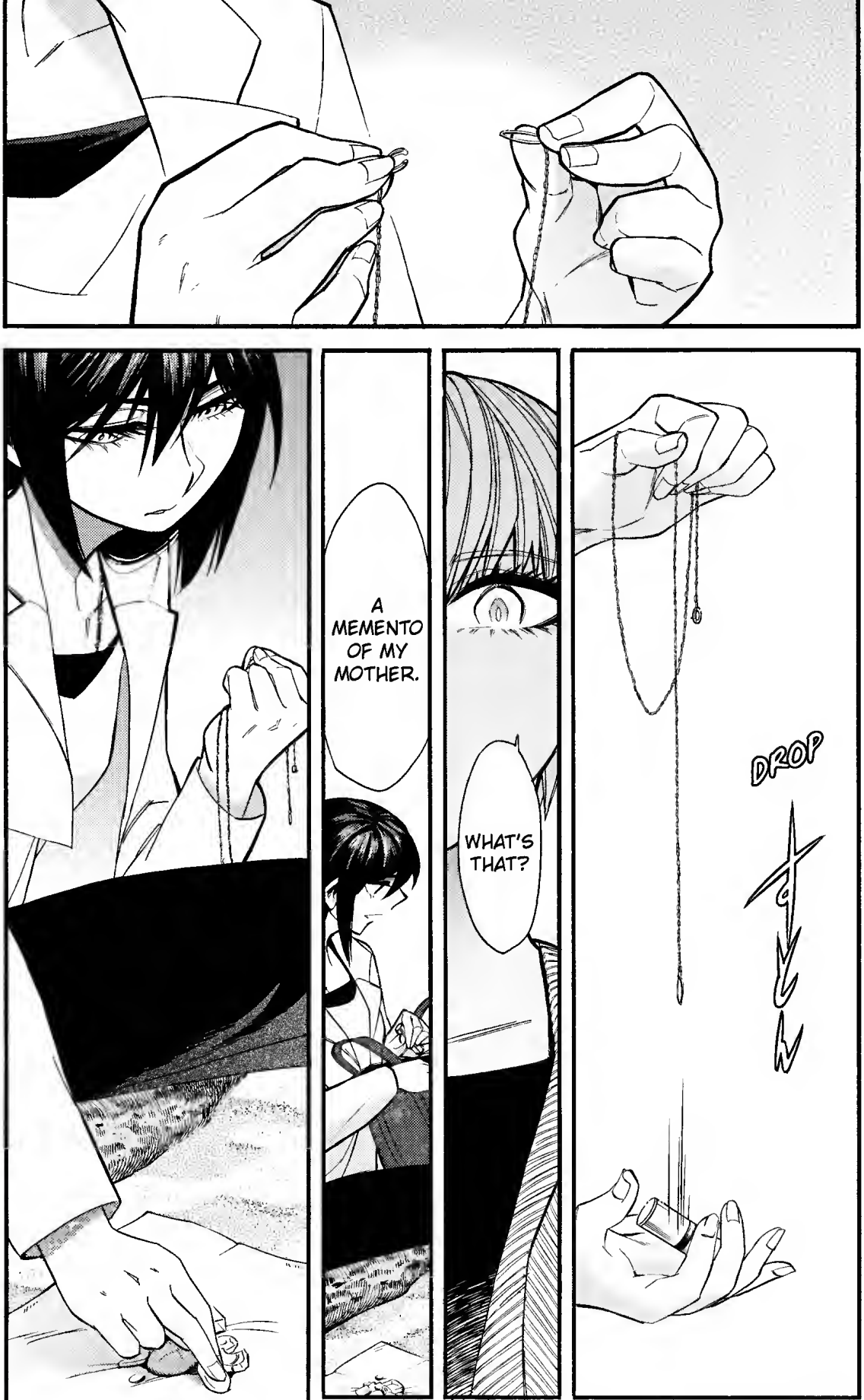
WHICH CHARAC-TER...
OF THE ONES YOU'VE PLAYED—LIKE LAURA—WAS THE MOST LIKE YOU?
HEY...
Interesting?

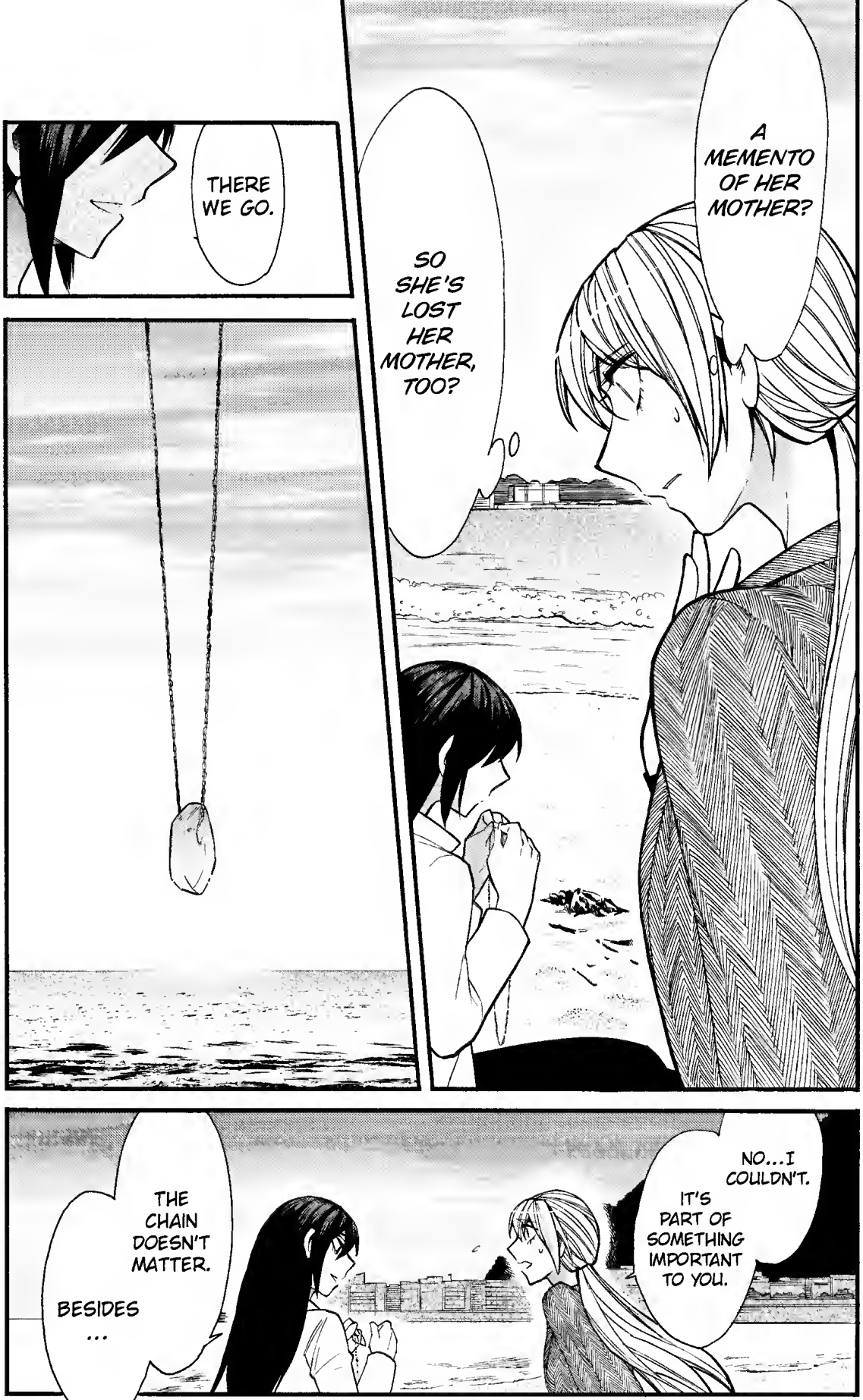
...
SOME WERE MORE LIKE ME, AND OTHERS, NOT REALLY ...
THERE HAVE BEEN SOME THAT SEEMED COMPLETELY ALIEN TO ME.
YOU DON'T FIND THAT SCARY?
ABANDONING YOURSELF...
TO BE SOMEBODY ELSE?
NOT AT ALL.
HAVE YOU NEVER FELT LIKE YOU HAVEN'T YET BECOME WHO YOU REALLY ARE?

THE... REAL YOU?
THIS MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO UNDER-STAND...
BUT I FEEL LIKE I COMPLETE MYSELF BY BECOMING SOMEONE ELSE.

...
COME ON.
WE HAVE TO GET GOING. IT'S GETTING DARK.
SO ...
WHAT DO WE DO WITH THESE?
I'LL THROW THEM AWAY.

IT'S A WASTE,
BUT IF I TOOK THEM, I'D JUST LOSE THEM OR BREAK THEM.
YEAH ...
HOLD ON.


DROP
WHAT'S THAT?
A MEMENTO OF MY MOTHER.

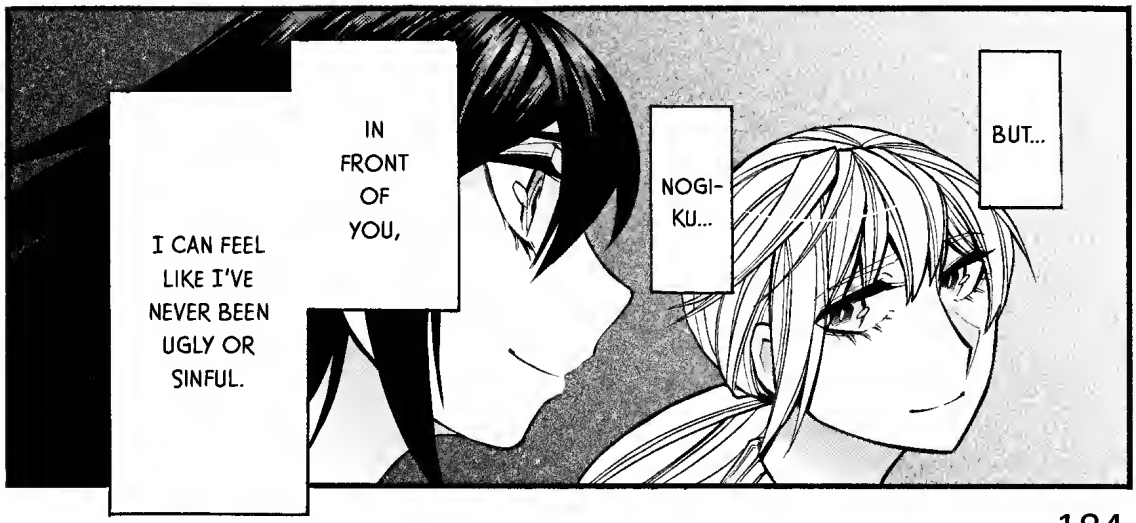

A MEMENTO OF HER MOTHER?
SO SHE'S LOST HER MOTHER, TOO?
THERE WE GO.
NO...I COULDN'T.
IT'S PART OF SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO YOU.
THE CHAIN DOESN'T MATTER.
BESIDES ...

I-
I'VE...
UM... ALWAYS WANTED TO COME TO THE SEA, TOO...
THANK YOU, NO-GIKU.
I'M GLAD I COULD BE HERE WITH YOU TODAY.
COULD I LIVE LIKE THAT, TOO?
AND LIVE LIKE YOU WANT TO LIVE.
GO WHEREVER YOU WANT TO GO.

NO.
I'M FILTHY TO THE CORE OF MY BODY
IN FRONT OF HER, MY FILTH GOES AWAY.
BUT ...
WITH YOU HERE WITH ME, IT LOOKS SO BEAUTIFUL.
COME ON.

LET'S GO GET SOMETHING NICE TO EAT.
IF MY FACE WERE STILL UGLY,
I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HAVE SUCH A LOVELY TIME WITH HER.
IF I WERE JUST NOT UGLY...
NEENA ...
I WOULDN'T HAVE MET YOU LIKE I DID, EITHER.

IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF MY UGLINESS.
IT'S BECAUSE I WAS DOOMED TO BE BORN UGLY.
IN FACT, WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REALLY TALK, TO BE FRIENDS.


BUT...
NOGI-KU...
IN FRONT OF YOU,
I CAN FEEL LIKE I'VE NEVER BEEN UGLY OR SINFUL.

I FEEL THIS STRANGE CONNECTION TO YOU...
AS IF WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR A LONG TIME.
SHE'S SMILING ...
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSI-NESS.
MORE IMPOR-TANTLY,
YOU WERE ABLE TO GET A HOLD OF KASANE FUCHI'S WHERE-ABOUTS, I ASSUME?
NO...IF I CALL THAT WOMAN ANYMORE, SHE'S BOUND TO REPORT ME TO THE POLICE.

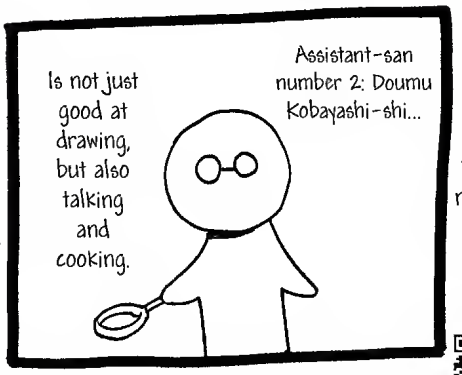
YOU SAID ... YOU'D DO ANYTHING FOR ME, DIDN'T YOU,
AMAGA-SAKI-SAN?

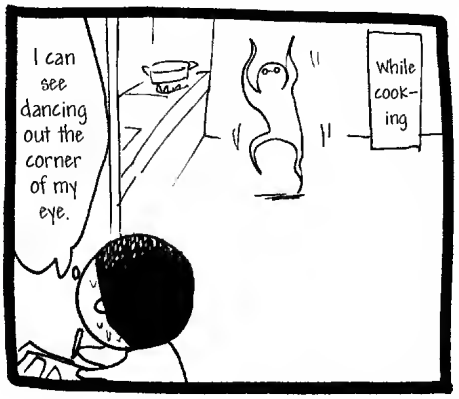
*People on Twitter started calling my workplace this at some point

# The Hyperbolic Office Chamber D*

## MY ASSISTANTS AND THEIR WEIRD SOUNDS: The Doumu-san Arc

You can read Doumu Kobayashi-san's manga here. ⇩

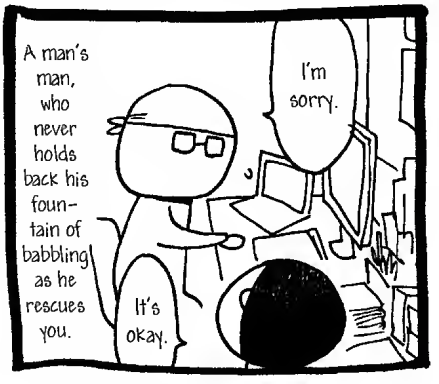




*During regular conversations, Doumu-san just talks about normal, sensible stuff.

## MY ASSISTANTS AND THEIR WEIRD SOUNDS: The Kirikakushi-san Arc

You can read his manga at Hyenas Clubs. ⇩




When I asked him, "What's Poko-chan?" he said, "A normal middle-aged man."

*Note: Like the Hyperbolic Time Chamber from Dragonball

# THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR BUYING VOLUME FOUR.

It's already volume four! And this is all because of the many people who have been so generous to me. So much has been going on besides working on this manga. I got flustered over my first autograph session, and flustered over my first guest appearance at an event.

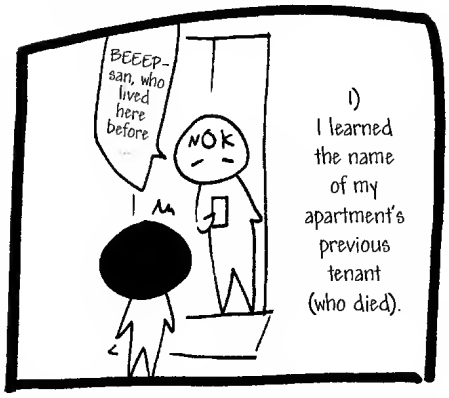
That event was "Kasane no Kai," and it's held every summer in Shizuoka. It's a super chaotic event with the theme of the ghost story Kasanegafuchi. They have plays, Noh songs, and a talkshow segment. With some trepidation, I agreed to appear in the talk segment.

I'd never done anything like that before, so I didn't do all that great. I felt bad for the audience and the other people on stage, but it was really fun talking and hearing people talk on the theme of "From Kasanegafuchi to the manga Kasane." I was really glad to be there.

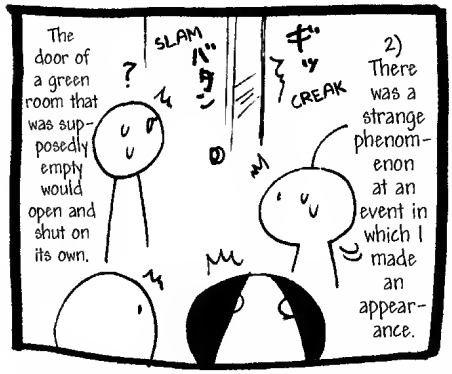
Thank you so much to the audience, Seiji Konita-sama, Masao Higashi-sama, Noboru Yasuda-sama, Housai Tsuruoka-sama, all the other people on stage, and the staff.

-Daruma Matsuura

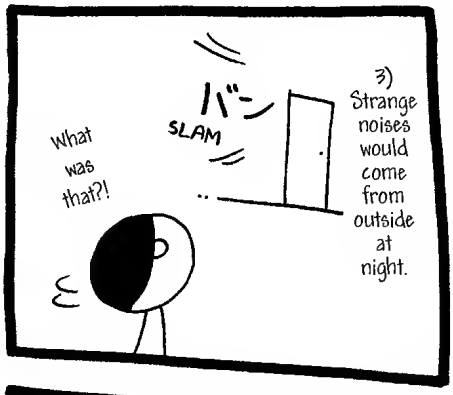
Three things that happened that made me think this year's Bon festival's a doozie

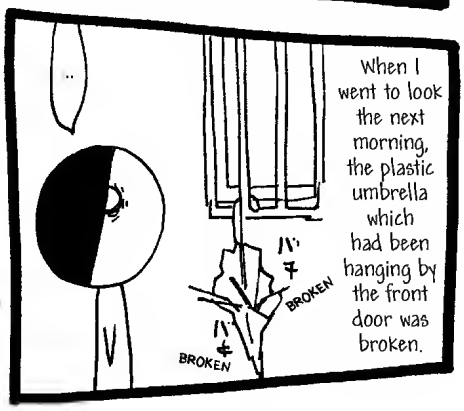



Note: Bon is a festival for venerating the spirits of ancestors




*See left



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English digital edition published by Kodansha Advanced Media, LLC, San Francisco.

www.kodanshacomics.com

ISBN: 9781682337448

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

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Lettering by Jacqueline Wee
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YKS Services LLC/SKY Japan, INC.